Seams of Glory

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SEAMS OF GLORY

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By

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"The Lesson Analyzed," "Pocket Lessons," "The Survival of the Unfit,"
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To the Many Thousands of Unknown Readers
to whom these messages came in the first place
and to the new readers who shall see them now

This Book is Affectionately Dedicated

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PREFACE

As will be seen at once, this book is not a unified discussion of some great theological problem or "practical" topic of popular pressing importance. It is neither treatise, propaganda, nor alarum. It is simply a collection of more or less valuable "pearls" secreted in the busy life of an "educator" in the schoolroom, pulpit, and through the press, strung on the thread of a dominating idea and purpose. The idea is of the essential nobility of the divinely inspired human struggle upward, in the very midst of life's imperfections, weaknesses, and sins, and that the whole process, even, or especially, in its most prosaic, difficult, or "sordid" details, is a most glorious one. The purpose of the book is to furnish a "medicine-chest" of spiritual tonics to those who are thus fashioning the fabrics of the soul, their own and others', and who need a "grain of glory mixed" with the "humbleness" of the task, threads of celestial gold wherewith to overcast the rugged seams. The book, it is hoped, will bear reading through at a sitting or two, from start to finish; but it can perhaps more profitably be taken up again and again, "as indicated" by need or desire. With its sister volume, "The Survival of the Unfit," it can furnish weekly tonics for a year's Christian life and work. Most of the chapters were originally editorials in the *Sunday School Times* or in the *Westminster Teacher,* to whom grateful acknowledgement is hereby made.

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FIRST CHORDS

THE GALLEON

A treasure ship bears down upon our shores;
  She brings a royal freight of God's good will—
No richer gems hath he in all his stores
  Than those which her capacious coffers fill,
    Nor ripen sweeter fruits in heaven's air,
    Nor angel hosts more glorious raiment wear,
Than crowd her cabins. Yet intense, alert,
  We thrust out guards to fend her from our coast,
We shrink and cringe, as at impending hurt,
  When she draws near, and to the uttermost
Resist her coming. Naught but bristling spears,
  And frowning guns, and enginery of bane,
We see. This, richest galleon of the years,
  Is God's strange, goodly treasure ship of pain!

—Philip Wendell Crannell.

I

THE GLORY OF THE SEAMY SIDE

It gives us a distinct and painful shock when we find that under the fair exterior of human character or achievement there is a region of imperfection, of rough and ragged edges, cross-currents, conflicting aims and wills, mingled motives. To some of us this sight of the "seamy side" brings bitter disillusionment, cynical distrust, questioning of every fair outside, doubt whether any of it is worth while. To others there comes a despairing, or contemptuous, or lax and easy tolerance, which is in itself the worst pessimism, most dangerous to the soul's integrity and power.

Neither mood is right. The "seamy side" is not only incidental to all human growth and accomplishment, it is absolutely indispensable, and, rightly handled, it furnishes life's greatest strength and honor. The proper attitude of mind toward it will mean its proper treatment, and its proper treatment will mean the turning of a shame and a discouragement into power and glory.

No human growth has ever been made without it, not even that of Jesus. We love to think of our Lord's finished character as being like the dress he wore, without break or seam. Without break, yes; no interruption of the continuity of good, no gap in righteousness; but without seam, no. "Tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin," his history was full of seams, edges where the divine love and purity in him came into painful contact with the human sin and hate in others, places also where the Son "learned obedience by the things which

he suffered." There were no divided counsels in that heart of his—no affinities for evil—yet in common with the rest of us, he whom "it behooved to become in all things like unto his brethren" must face temptation from without, discouragement, disappointments, the hostility or faithlessness of men. Still more, he must at each stage, in the face of awful difficulties and against the pull of awful forces, work out into actual achievement of obedience and righteousness the inward principles of filial faith and love within him. This was the meaning of the temptation; this was the story of his life. Beneath the triumphal journeys of the popular "prophet of Nazareth" in those palmy, Galilean days, what perception of the inner weakness, stupidity, shallowness, selfishness of men, what increasing shadows from the coming cross, what necessity for all-night struggles with God in prayer! And as the contest drew to its culmination, Gethsemane reveals the inner struggle, great beyond all others in human history, of one who with bloody sweat must reaffirm, and almost reenact, in face of an unutterable sacrifice, his entire oneness with his Father's will.

As the Master, so his disciples. This inner region of incompleteness, raggedness, struggle, is incidental to this world of progress, where we are engaged in working out with crude tools and faulty materials and faultier skill the perfect designs of God's will and our God-implanted aspirations. No process has yet been discovered whereby perfection can be reached without passing through many stages of imperfection, and imperfection is in some way or other always rough or jagged or crude or harsh. This does not disturb us in the apple, the peach, the strawberry, or the colt. Why should it in the man or in the institution? But woe to him who is content with "green" apples in October!

In this human life of ours, also, junctions and associations and unions have to be made with other lives. That means seams, and with our imperfections in judgment, our selfishness, our short-sightedness, rough edges are inevitable. If we had the best will in the world we would find it difficult to get together perfectly, for we cannot penetrate to our brother's deepest and purest motives, or get his entire point of view, and neither of us possesses the ideal insight and knowledge to grasp the situation or the ideal wisdom to meet it. How can there help being the clash of ideas and ideals, of wills and purposes, of plans and determinations? And how but by this process of commotion, interplay, adjustment, even, as it proves, of conflict, could the final unity of plan and purpose be wrought out? What garment, uniting such diverse "fragments," of such widely different shapes, sizes, substances, could be fashioned without seams?

What still further complicates the problem and makes the seamy side still more inevitable is sin. Within us this evil enemy keeps up its ancient struggle. Not without bitterest contest will these forces surrender their sway. The effort of the new life to eliminate them means cross-currents, "tide-rips," uproar, confusion, in which sometimes the evil may rise uppermost and win a temporary skirmish, especially if we fail to call on Him who can say to the tossing waves, "Be still!" And into our adjustments with men, too, it thrusts the chief, and a perpetual, disturbance. "If we had the best will in the world"—but we have not. We have wills deflected, if not completely ruled, by passion or pride or prejudice or desire of mastery, sometimes consciously, sometimes all unaware.

> Our wills are ours, we know not how;
> Our wills are ours, to make them thine;

but in that effort what commotion within ourselves, and until it is complete, what "seamy" dealings with our fellow men!

But it is good to remember that this region of the struggle and the imperfection is the place where the work is being done and the actual glory won. The real manufacturer, the real artist, is interested of course in the completed product; surfaces are a part of his interest. But what he chiefly wants to see is what the thing is made of, how it is put together, what machines, what processes, produced its parts. The physician is interested in flesh and skin, but the important thing to him is anatomy and the play and interplay of vital parts. Back of the gaily painted canvas on the stage are the framework, the wheels, the tracks, the pulleys that "run the thing." The brick and terra-cotta casing of the "sky-scraper" may amuse the unlearned, but the builder wants to know about the angular skeleton of steel. The "seamy side" is the real side, the effective side, the real thing. The moving and the shaping forces, the very substances, are here and nowhere else.

Still more heartening is the fact that if one keeps on looking and thinking and hoping, after awhile he begins to see under the ugliness the real beauty of things. He begins to see the shapeliness and strength of the stitches, the inherent soundness of the cloth. He sees that the virtue really bulks larger than the vice, that the love is continually overmastering the selfishness, that some power is at work among the cogs and wheels which keeps them moving toward the desired end, even if he does hear too often the shriek of unoiled friction. He can see many a character slowly, and some characters very rapidly, losing the acidity, the harshness, the acridness. Very possibly the young observer grows heartsick, disgusted with man

and God when he discovers how few fully healthy people there are in the world, but later, as an old physician, working in among the delicate, intricate, human mechanism, he sees how marvelously it still ticks on, and finds in the midst of all the distress, deeper at work than his own clumsy touch, the countless curative agencies of the healing God, and he gets a new awe, a new reverence, a new faith, a new cheer. The seamy side is the glorious side. Who would not rejoice to be at work with God in among where things are made?

But need the seams be ragged? Need they be dirty? Need they be the home of all sorts of germs and growths?

Certainly we cannot for a moment translate our acquiescence in the existence of the "seamy side" into tolerance of sin. Sin is no seam. It is a cut, a flaw. It is that which the whole process is trying to eliminate, which has made most of the process necessary. Sin may be incidental, but it is incidental death, and must be attacked with all the force that in us is. The new life, like the new medicine and surgery, pursues with jealous, implacable hostility, the slightest germ in the remotest corner. It makes clean the inside of the platter, not for consistency chiefly, but because the inside is the thing, and out of it are the issues of life. Vitality's strategic attack is from within outward, not from the skin inward. Life is at its highest, is doing its best work, just there, and it must.

It is possible, as has been hinted, for the seamy side to be the most beautiful side. In old Greek temples, where the corner of a subjacent stone has broken off, and you can run your finger along the under surface of the stone above, you find it polished like glass. In the best unlined garments of today, doubtless of always, the seams are not ragged, they are carefully shaped and finished. You

could wear the garment inside out, and it would be as perfect, as artistic, as beautiful, as your so-called "right side" could possibly be. Indeed, with the apparel which is to protect the delicate skin of little children, the inside is wrought more carefully, more beautifully than the outer surface.

Why should it not be so in this realm? There might be question as to the economic propriety of polishing the interior of some wall which can never be seen and where no germ can lodge. But of this region of our life, which any time may be exposed to men's gaze, which all the time is exposed to God's gaze and which always constitutes our real life, there can be no question. We have no right to leave a ragged edge. No right thing can have a wrong side. It is sin to be content with inferior motives, inferior action, inferior achievements. Self-excuse is partial spiritual suicide—it is wholly unfaithfulness to God. "The king's daughter is all beautiful within." That may mean "within the palace," but in the realm of spirit it does mean "within herself." Our ideal is a character, an institution, which grows more beautiful the deeper you enter in. You get in where you see the seams, the timbers, even hear the whirring of the machinery of struggle, but you do not get in where you see bats and dirt and foulness. You know that you are dealing with a human being, with a finite thing, with unsolved problems, with unfinished tasks, but your mine grows richer the farther you penetrate.

This is no impossible dream. God, and their faith, has enriched the world with many such characters, many such institutions. They are his invitation, his challenge to all the rest of us. That is his ideal and his practise. Get into the commonest of his creations with the microscope, and the seamy side is the beauty side. Why should our

friends not find us at our heart's core richer than they thought? Like Robert with Elizabeth Browning, they

> Cross a step or two of dubious twilight,
> Come out on the other side, the novel
> Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
> Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

Of him at whose heart's center dwells in power the living Christ, this shall be true; it is true.

"OUR OWN STITCHES"

THE LINE OF BEAUTY

"Straight," said the moralist, "the line of beauty,
The forthright, undeflecting path of duty!"
"Round," said the artist, "like old Giotto's 'O,'
Whose points unswerving round their center flow."
"Curved, like her lips," the laughing lover cries,
"Or silken brows above the maiden's eyes!"
But with a smile the heavenly Love upspoke:
"The line of beauty, children, is the Yoke;
Curved, where the willing shoulder meets the bow
To bear God's burden, ease a brother's woe;
Straight, where right's cross-beam holds the round in place;
Duty and love combined—lo, here is grace!
Angel, or saint a million years in bliss,
Could draw or dream no fairer line than this!"

—*Philip Wendell Crannell.*

II

THE GOSPEL OF AMPUTATION

The religion of Christ is the religion of fuller and completer being. "I come not to destroy but to fulfil"; "that they may have life, and may have it abundantly." Any teaching or practise that contracts or mutilates lies under suspicion of being hostile to the real spirit and power of Christianity. Other things being equal, the best Christian is the completest man, whose every faculty on every side is in fullest development and freest action.

And yet, as unmistakably as anything he ever said, Jesus proclaims again and again the gospel of amputation. He insists that there are times when it is duty, and privilege, and gain, to cut off, cut out, root up, deep and inherent parts of our being. "If thy right eye causeth thee to stumble, pluck it out." "If thy right hand causeth thee to stumble, cut it off." "It is good for thee to enter into life maimed or halt rather than having two hands or two feet to be cast into the eternal fire."

Such expressions, to many minds, especially those who have not felt the clutch of sin, seem extreme, almost foreign to the spirit of Christianity, breathing an asceticism or a desperation which looks unhealthy. But there is a true "gospel of amputation." It is based on the awfulness of sin and hell, and the gloriousness of heaven and character. It assumes that this act of self-denial, self-crucifixion, is not the arbitrary, but the logical path to a higher end; that the "life" which is surrendered is a lower, passing life, and the life gained is the life indeed. The Christian who is marked by such scars, self-inflicted

or accepted, has the royalest of decorations. Henceforth let no man trouble him: he bears on his body the marks of the Lord Jesus. He is following him at whom "many were astonished: his visage was so marred more than any man, and his form more than the sons of men."

What are some of these honorable scars? There is the scar that marks for some resolute, determined soul a glorious (not an inglorious) escape. He was trapped. Some faculty of his nature held him fast to sin. It was not that his heart was fouler or his will weaker than theirs who "jest at scars" because "they never felt a wound"—in just that spot. Perhaps evil heredity—mind, soul, or body—put him into that trap before he knew. He struggled. He tried moderate means of "temperance"; in vain. At last, with the sweat of soul agony on his forehead, he cut off that limb, he entered into life—maimed, we say. One great part of his nature he resolutely refuses to exercise. He is a hero of spiritual struggle, an example of spiritual wisdom. No one who knows this world of ours has failed to see many a case where moderation was death and amputation the only escape.

Often this severance is less dramatic, but no less real and no less necessary. What another man feels is the steady enwrapping of a slowly destructive atmosphere. Things that possibly in the abstract might be used for the gratification of legitimate hungers, even the development of legitimate faculties, are quietly sapping his spiritual life, dulling his spiritual vision. As did the concert stage with Jenny Lind, as do the theater, the card party, the dance, these things are making him think less of his Bible, his heaven, and his Christ. He cuts them off. These are parts of his nature now which lie quiescent, which perhaps may atrophy and disappear. His friend, who realizes neither his struggle nor the noble spiritual prizes at stake,

shakes his head in pitying or amused contempt at that poor, narrow, prejudiced, mutilated life.

Nobler is the scar of amputation for rescue's sake. The foreign missionary deliberately severs himself from the gratifications and opportunities of the intellectual life to plunge into the heathen darkness. He returns on his furloughs larger in some ways. But who has not noticed his truncated life, possibly his halting speech, a heathen language largely taking the place of his mother tongue? He has lost many of his former interests and sympathies. He is engrossed in one thing, atrophied in others. The "globe-trotter" who visits him laughs at his narrow ranges.

Influence is the purpose of much noble Christian self-amputation. This is constructive rescue, preventive salvation, saving another not from a sin that has engulfed, but from a sin that may. It often takes much more clear sight and sturdy "grit" than the other. It seems foolish to refuse this grand opera, that Shakespearean rendition, the other elaborate and inspiring social function because our going may lead some other, who "has no business to be so weak, any way," into similar or lower dangers. You are sure that, if *you* go, only higher instincts and tastes will be gratified. And they are "so necessary to a well-rounded manhood." Why cut them off? And again a "healthy-minded," liberal-minded world amusedly echoes "Why?" And Paul answers: "If meat cause my brother to stumble I will eat no flesh while the world standeth." His voice in heaven will outsing in sweetness several operas.

Like this, but with the joy of positiveness, is amputation for efficiency. Every efficiency in this world costs a hundred withered possibilities. The man who determines to be an "all-around" man, developed on every side equally

and fully, will be developed probably nowhere, but if he could be developed as he wishes, he would be so "round" as to have neither cutting edge, nor piercing point, nor effective striking surface anywhere. He cannot be. Time, strength, vitality, are insufficient. He must select. The selection of the one is the rejection of the many. Every effective life pays that price. For the Christian it is the supremest wisdom as well as supreme devotion. "Is anything that is human alien to you?" Oceans of human things are alien to me, but *the* thing, the salvation of man's immortal spirit, the coming of God's kingdom, absorbs my powers. I am color-blind and deaf. "This one thing I do." Must these others atrophy? If they must, they must.

Perhaps this slaughter of a section of our life assumes its intensest and most pathetic shape in the sacrifice for the beloved, that he may be rescued from pain or death or given the fulness of life's possibilities. The eldest son has his aspirations for college, for literature, for art. But he faces those little ones thrown on his care, and he turns his back upon all these desires and dreams. He plunges into his daily drudgery, and sees his "children" advance, one by one realize in their ways the possibilities that once in his way were his. When his task is done he is a man of forty. His once delicate fingers have grown clumsy, and not in this world shall they ever work the witchery they might have wrought. The brain-cells, once expanding for the larger thoughts, have contracted and hardened upon life's little, sordid problems, till they cannot open any more. He can wish those larger thoughts, but he cannot will or win them now. What a price! He has cut off his right hand, he has plucked out his right eye. One could weep at the pathos of it. But the angels sing! Did you watch that mother, contracting her life for that

child she bent over? Steadily she cut off her larger interests. Incessant care, watchfulness, labor, longing, hardened her brain-cells too. Her memory is not what it was. Her nerves are shattered. Her thoughts find it hard to leave the sick-room. Her life at a thousand points is an amputated life. She did it at love's call; but what a price!

Where is here any *gospel* of amputation? This is the stern *law* of amputation, that for every gain there is a cost, that every open hand that grasps must first be a hand that relinquishes. Ah, but it *is* a gospel! The glad tidings is that he who thus has lost his lower life has gained an incalculably higher. He cut off his hand, but he annexed liberty, rescue, power, Christ for his whole body and soul. He deliberately turned his back on certain intellectual pleasures or gains, but he went into the inner sanctuary of the love of Christ. He lost what was more than his right arm—associations, interests, mental aptitudes—but he gained Christian vision; he became, as so many missionaries do, one of God's world-wide statesmen, an incarnation of Christ for the blessing of needy peoples. He held his foot from paths he might have entered; and knew that many, or even one, who might have strode downward, walked the upward way with him. His confined, contracted life concentrated the white heat of spirituality that burnt a way for Christ and good. With the seeming atrophy of mental capacity and power came the fuller, deeper power of the heart and the spirit, the godlike glories of self-conquest. The knowledge that puffeth up was denied, or it withered away; but the love that buildeth up remained. He entered into life. Maimed? A spirit full grown!

III

CROSS-QUESTIONING OUR AMBITIONS

Did you ever stop to think what strange things the usual ambitions of men are?

There are what we may call the *numerical* ambitions. A man sets out to amass a hundred thousand dollars, or a hundred millions, or to "annex" so many square miles of land, so many counties, or countries. There is no real significance in the amount or in the specific thing itself. The dollar indicates nothing about the man's real being. There is no assignable force to the two millions of dollars above that possessed by the one million, or in two million acres above one. He has set an abitrary, a really imaginary, standard for himself. Worse than that, in its pursuit he is likely to smother his soul by mere mechanical displacement. Things financial completely overshadow things real. And if he does that, he is sure to be allured into superficial or false and evil methods.

Even in church work there is a subtle danger in these numerical aspirations. Church or pastor sets a certain goal in numbers; a hundred members added this year, so many thousand dollars raised. The mark is purely arbitrary and superficial. Five, soundly converted, led into a full and effective life in Christ, may be much more valuable, redound far more to the glory of God, than a hundred added to the roll, even though really converted. Five hundred dollars, loving, spontaneous, surely speak God's praise as five thousand mechanically extracted never would. Number is a merely mechanical measure; it tells nothing of quality or size.

That is the trouble. Numerical goals always tempt, if they do not invariably lead, to mechanical, superficial, unworthy methods. No path is better than its goal.

Topographical, some other ambitions may be called, literally or figuratively. One starts out in life with the determination to reach a certain latitude and longitude, a certain altitude. He purposes to live and grow great in a certain city or State; he will climb to a certain height, social (Is this usually a woman?), or political, or commercial. He will gain a certain office—senator from this State; president, possibly, of that college. Well, what of it? A man on the street accosts you with a "hard-luck" tale, and a petition for the price of a ticket to another city. But when he gets to the other city he will be the same mendicant he was in this.

We are nervously anxious about places. And we must not forget that when we covet altitude, we are coveting loneliness, frosts, and vertigo. The place we covet may be, often is, utterly unfitted for us, and crowded with undesirable companions, small and great. And this definite desire for place or location, like the numerical ambition, tempts, if it does not persuade, to all sorts of unworthy means, unreal, unlovely, the arts of the politician, the self-seeker, the place-seeker.

Indeed, what has place to do with size, as a matter of actual fact? Is the giant any smaller on the plain? Is the dwarf colossal on the hill? How majestic is the fly on the fly-wheel's rim? The angels must weep, and the demons and some men assuredly do chuckle, at these mismeasured ambitions.

Others of these goals of human endeavor might be classed as ambitions *agglutinative*—a large word, but no larger than the aims of those who cherish them. We are going to be the nucleus rolling through life's snow-fields

and gathering to ourselves that which by and by will make us a mountain. Everything shall center around us, minister to our growth and greatness. The difficulty is that this is precisely the opposite of the true greatness, which always consists in giving, never in getting. If the uplifted Jesus will draw all men unto him, it is not that they may add to his glory and power, but that he may communicate his glory and power to them, and make them potent centers of beneficent output, like himself—lights in the world even as he is the Light of the World. Light never absorbs, it bestows.

Besides, the agglutinative never really "agglutinates." What it gathers is snow, which at death's touch, and usually long before, melts. What could have expanded, but only by giving, has contracted, withered, atrophied by its "agglutinating." A lifetime of such success leaves the man with no permanent addition to his possessions, and with an infinitesimal soul.

By the tests of the heavenly standards, which are simply those of unsophisticated common sense, the *autocratic* ambitions fare as badly. These are the various forms of the desire to exercise power over our fellow man. It is the most natural thing in the world. No man who has strength is normal if he does not wish to use it; and no strength rightly appeals to us like that which shows itself in the mastery of human beings like ourselves. To swing great elemental forces is great, but to swing men is greater. Only, is that sway simply the unreasoned play of youthful strength, the selfish determination of the egotist, the deed of one who will because he can, and who wills because he wants to show he can, or for the mere, sheer pleasure of being master?

Anyway, all external sway is no sway at all. The only real, positive power any man exerts over another is the

power of the ideas he conveys, of his own deep, true feeling or noble aspiration; better, the power of the divine to which he has introduced this fellow man of his. Any other sway, so far as it is possible, is negative, an imposed slavery, which like mercy has a twofold operation, only this "curses him that gives and him that takes." He who sways that way, slays where he sways. He who makes the men he meets greater for meeting him is the true master of men. He is infinitely poor who makes them less.

"I will set you free," said the owner. "But I feel no degradation in being your slave." "I do, in being your master." The man who has dominated men all his life will look for a cave to hide in from heaven's search-light when once he feels its blaze upon his soul.

All these forms of ambition, whether numerical, or topographical, or agglutinative, or autocratic, are also *competitive*. They derive a great share, the largest share, of their force and appeal from their desire to get ahead of others, to have more money, to gain a higher place, to surround ourselves with more things and people, to govern more men. One man on the desert island, with no other man to compare with, would hardly be led off by any of these ambitions. It is not simply that we are social beings and that the presence, action, thought, and feeling of our fellows furnish most of the value to most of the things we have, but comparison with our fellow men gives these things their chief desirability.

Yet how completely absurd it is. We want to outstrip. Well, whom? And why? Shall we in any way be smaller if he outstrips us, or be in any way larger if we outstrip him? Are we any better able to meet life's responsibilities, demands, crises, because this man next to us is less able; or are we less able because he is more able? Competitive

comparison is the one thing that the ripened kingdom of heaven knows nothing of. It will be noted that when Paul begins to compare himself with others, he prefaces it by calling himself a fool. He may have to do it for strategic reasons, on the principle of "answering a fool according to his folly," but it revolts him nevertheless. Competitive ambition is the silliest thing on earth. There is just one man on this globe whom I ought to outstrip, and that is the man I was yesterday, the man I am today, the man I shall be tomorrow. The man who wants to surpass another man is least in the kingdom of heaven; that in him which wants to surpass is not in the kingdom of heaven at all.

There remains just one allowable ambition. It is twofold; to be the most and best that we can be; to do the most and best that we can do. And how can this lofty ambition ever be realized?

Never by the works or efforts of depraved, impotent human nature—impotent because sin-paralyzed. But abundantly, gloriously, omnipotently realized by letting God do for us that which our ambition craves. And when we say "by letting God do for us," we mean the marvels of what he means by his grace—his grace through Jesus Christ.

How can we *be* the most and the best? By letting Christ become our life, our actual being. And how can we do this? By receiving him as our Saviour from the awful penalty and paralysis of our sin. When he becomes our Saviour he takes us into literal, organic union with himself, grafting us into himself, as a branch into a vine; and now he and we are one life, one Spirit; our life is indeed the Best and the Most, for "I have been crucified with Christ, and it is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." Nothing less than God's best can satisfy our best

ambitions; and Christ is God's best, and Christ is ready to be our life.

How can we *do* our best and our most? By letting Christ, our new and our omnipotent life, live our life for us even as the vine lives the life of the branch; and produce in us and through us the fruit-bearing that we are ambitious to show, even as the vine produces the fruit on the branch. Remembering our helplessness, we are to fulfil our ambition to do the most by working out our salvation in fear and trembling; but we are to have no uncertainty as to the result, remembering that "it is God who worketh in you both to will and to work, for his good pleasure." Then God will satisfy his own ambition for us; and that will be enough.

IV

HAS ONE A RIGHT TO HAPPINESS?

"Has one a right to happiness?" asks a widely scattered advertisment of a would-be epoch-making book promulgating "liberal" ideas upon divorce. The implication is that the answer must unmistakably be "Yes." For the right to happiness is quite generally conceded. In this, people are in accord with a venerable document of our republican faith which asserts that man has certain inalienable rights, such as life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness, the truth of which we have for one hundred and forty years been illustrating by electrocuting certain of our citizens, shutting up others, and providing social and other conditions which have made life a long misery for many more. That, other things not being neglected, a good God or an intelligent government will seek the happiness of the greatest number of their subjects or citizens, cannot be disputed. But these other things must be considered; and some of them must be considered first.

The easy notion that "one has a right to happiness" is the cause of more than nine-tenths, if indeed it is not the cause of all, the sin, foulness, strife, and unhappiness in the world. Wipe out the idea, and replace it with the truth, and the long and shameful record of the divorced, and, alas, of many of the undivorced, would disappear at a breath.

The question, "Has one a right to happiness?" is compounded of several dangerous ethical errors. It assumes that a man or a woman is "one," when as a matter of fact we are each both less and more than one. We are

fractions, which must be completed by many other lives to make a full and rounded unity. No one can rightly consider any problem of life unless he considers the many others that make up his life. And each one of us is also part of a half dozen, a dozen, a hundred others, in our touch on other lives, in our weight and influence and bearing upon our fellows. Any soul that approaches a moral question with "one" on his lips starts fatally wrong.

If we take next on our lips the words "a right," we move fatally farther astray. When we are considering another man, and what he can be, or what we can or ought to do for him, "right" is the word; but from the angle of what we are to seek for ourselves it would be an incalculable boon to the world if "right" could be forever expunged from the human vocabulary. The only real justification any man has for standing up for his "rights" is lest his failure to do so should breed in the body politic the bad habit of injustice; but that is not on his own account: it is simply that society may be clear of sin, and others may receive their due. Imagine what a world this would become if all men, or the majority of men, at once ceased to strive for rights and began to live only for duties!

Perhaps an even more fatal error is wrapped up in that word "happiness." The spirit that asks if we have a right to that, and proposes to climb to it over the broken laws of God and man, has utterly misconceived what happiness is. In its original meaning happiness was a state of "good hap," the fortunate state, the state that had received the best that could come to it, or at least a very genuine good. It was the heathen synonym for the Christian "blessed," given by impartial fate or capricious deities, where the latter "blessed" is bestowed by all-wise and holy beneficence. But neither of these conceptions finds place

in the word as it is used in this question. Happiness here is pleasant human association, congenial companionship, satisfied and yet unsated desire, delights, pleasure, "thrills." In the light of that definition, which is clearly the one foremost in the questioner's mind, is it possible to answer "Yes"?

Of course we have no right to be happy, no right to any combination of personal pleasurable relationship or feeling, at the expense of a broken law of God. True, many of those who flatly insist on this "right" question whether God is, or whether he has made such laws. But those who have been reared in reverence for God and his book, who have seen in Jesus Christ a competent Lawgiver as well as a capable Saviour, will be slow to buy emotional satisfaction at such a price. And it would be well for the others to examine once again the "law and the testimony," and the deep, wise, universal, eternal principles on which they are based.

The happiness that is won at the cost of lowering our own high ideals, coarsening or blunting our own delicacy of conscience, dethroning the spirit of its supremacy over the flesh, abandoning our fidelity to promise and violating the rights of others, is a costly gain. The substitution of self-gratification, as a motive, for fairness, duty, helpfulness, works fatal havoc on the soul. The fact that such havoc is also accompanied by spiritual blindness and insensibility explains, no doubt, the small effect such considerations as this have on those who contemplate or have taken the step.

"But," says one, "have we not a right to happiness if we obey the rules of the game?" We shall never have the great questions of morals and duty put on the right foundation till we learn to answer even this question, and with an eternal emphasis, "No!"

It is rather a bold thing at the start, for any man to talk about his "rights" in the presence of God. Paul would have laughed, or shuddered, at that. The clay making inquisition of the potter! "Right" implies some claim derived from action on our part. And when we have done all, we shall be obliged to say, "Unprofitable servants; we have done that which it was our duty to do":

> For merit lives from man to man,
> And not from man, O Lord, to thee.

The proper human attitude toward joy or pain, "happiness" or sorrow, is, "Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight."

Yet, looked at in imagination from the divine side, that of the heavenly Father who desires to do most for his earthly children, is not happiness the one gift he seeks to have them inherit? Even here, we must realize that happiness is no soul's primary right, or good, or aim. At best it is a by-product. If we do look forward with the eye of faith and see the proposition of human faithfulness, goodness, and character, with the divine love and power, worked out into its final accompaniments of unbroken heavenly peace, joy, rapture, we are very certain that the one main aim is the deed and the character, and not the feeling. We are very certain of another thing, that, in the stage in which we now are, the feeling is entirely subsidiary and incidental, and ever and again omissible. We might be "happy" forever, and forever miss life's goal. We might never once be "happy," and yet gloriously gain life's goal. We are not here to be happy. We are here to be harmless, and holy, and helpful. We are here to be coworkers with God in the world's redemption. We are here to battle for the right and against the wrong. We are here to fight and foil the Adversary of souls. This

light thing called "happiness" has small place in the vocabulary of a soul that has weight or vision.

God's men have not been "happy" men. They have been men pressed down by burdens, pierced with the pangs of human sufferings and sin; like their own Lord, "men of sorrows, and acquainted with grief." They have had sunshine, "the light that never was on land or sea." They have had peace, "such peace as the world neither gives nor takes." They have had joy, the joy of the warrior, of the life-saver, of the heart-fellow of Jesus Christ. They have not missed entirely the finer, lighter pleasures of loving humanity; indeed, of these they have had the finest. They may, or may not, know the love of wife and children; they certainly know the sweet fellowship of human love, service, gratitude. But, appreciating these things to the full, they have counted none of them dear and weighty beside this: "To accomplish thy work!"

A "right to happiness"! Let the child about his play ask that; but let the full-grown man or woman, made in the image of God, made for God, ask only one right, that right itself a glorious gift of grace: the right to spend and be spent for humanity; the right to be a beneficent spiritual power in this world; the right to walk in the very footsteps of Christ!

V

SHALL WE CHOOSE OR SUBMIT?

Choice certainly seems nobler than submission. To enter upon a great and exacting task freely, voluntarily, in the exercise of one's intelligent and sovereign selection, looks like a much higher thing than to submit, even with satisfaction or eagerness, to some duty or task or limitation imposed on us by circumstance, by obligation—that is to say, by God. Submission seems to be such a passive sort of virtue, with so little of the regal power of personality. It is assuredly great to choose freely some sacrifice, some deprivation, some endeavor which demands all one's manhood. What greatness is there in meekly bowing one's back to the load?

It is true that the larger number of human tasks and limitations have to be submitted to rather than chosen. They are the logical and necessary incidents, methods indeed, of the work we are doing. When we chose that, we accepted them. But even that work may not have been our choice. We got into it, step by step, without planning, without intention, without even foresight; but here we are. And we cannot change. Comparatively few people have deliberately sat down before the various avenues and chances and responsibilities of life and said, "I will take this, and this." We found ourselves amid certain family and social surroundings, certain equipments, and, alas! certain non-equipments. There does not seem any great glory in merely adjusting ourselves to the inevitable, and doing with what grace we may the thing we simply have

to do. We greatly envy those who do seem to have the power of election.

A young man inherits a large fortune and is enabled to give himself to the missionary work on his own charges, freely bestowing his means as well as his labor. We have an equal missionary zeal, but it will never be our satisfaction and glory to pay our own expenses; we must depend upon our brethren for support; this is our limitation; we would not have chosen it. Or again, a man of the so-called higher classes, really higher in social and education, perhaps spiritual, advantages, voluntarily devotes himself to the uneducated or "lower strata." Perhaps we cannot make that descent of love and devotion, for we are of them, bone of their bone, flesh of their flesh; our lot is cast among them, perhaps will be, must be, ought to be, always cast among them. What glory is there in being where we cannot help being?

But great as is the glory of choice, the glory of submission is greater. It is greater because it is a loftier and sincerer tribute to almighty God, it pays God a deeper, truer "compliment," assumes that he is higher, places him higher, in our thought, than our choosing possibly can. It says, "Not unto us, not unto us, O Lord, be the glory" and the choice, and the glory *of* the choice. "Even so, Father, for so it seemeth good in thy sight."

To say, "I do this right thing, this noble thing, because I choose to do it," may be a splendid exercise of personality; but to say, "I do this right thing, this noble thing, because Thou hast chosen it for me to do, and I choose what thou hast already chosen," is greater, because self-will is conquered, lost in God's will. The soul has ceased to be a comet, careering around in an orbit self-determined, and has become a planet, revolving—as it is the deep, true nature of things that it should revolve—around its cen-

tral Sun. There is a good deal of wilfulness about will, even about the reformer's and hero's choice, where it is only *choice*. Where it is wholly submission, it touches the profoundest depths, the loftiest heights, of surrender. It is the best victory to sing:

> I loved to choose and see my path; but now,
> *Lead Thou me on!*

For in our choosing, too often "pride ruled my will," and subtly allured—sometimes a noble pride, but a pride that has its dangers. If the missionary rich in this world's goods counts it joy that he can proclaim the gospel at his own charges, may not the missionary who is dependent on his fellow Christians for support rejoice that *he* can surrender this privilege in the service of Jesus, and delight for Christ's sake to be dependent upon his brethren? His Master had just that glory. He who was rich became poor for our sakes, accepted the necessities of his identification with men and his example-giving to men, in this very limitation of dependence. Not only did he take upon himself the form of a servant, but he also became one who subsisted by the bounty of those who loved him; and he who came to minister did it at the price of being ministered unto. Not seldom it takes incomparably more grace to accept than it does to choose.

After all, do not the two ideas meet, submission being the summit of choice? What is choice, in fact, if it be right and true and best, but our successful effort to discover what was God's choice for us before? What else means all our weighing of arguments, our forecasting of probabilities, our prayers? Are they not simply an asking what God has chosen? It is precarious to speculate amid depths so profound, but is not this the supreme glory of our Christ himself? Nothing can be freer and heartier

than his choice, as we can imagine him in the "councils of eternity" freely electing his whole career of earthly humiliation, service, and sacrifice. But what he chose was what had been chosen for him. "In the volume of the book it is written of me, I come to do thy will, O God." His every step was in a path laid out for him by the Father: "The Son doeth only what he seeth the Father doing." Every word was the utterance of an inward word of God: "The words that I say unto you I speak not from myself." Every act was the working out of an indwelling originating will and power: "The Father doeth the works." And in his supreme example for his own, his supreme service for his own, did he not pour out his soul into channels divinely graven for him: "Not my will, but thine"? Did he not accept to the heights and the depths the minutest, most awful details of a divinely ordered plan, ratified, accepted, executed by that filial obedience, that brotherly self-sacrifice? It is finished! What? God's program for his Son. The supreme glory of man's choice is submission to God's will.

VI

GROWTH OR GRACE?

One view of the Christian life regards its maintenance and progress as chiefly a matter of gradual growth. The law of habit, the law of spiritual momentum, are continually at work to train the soul's muscles to greater girth and strength, to give increasing precision to its choices of good, and to establish prevailing spiritual impulses, which almost, but not quite, automatically move the life in the right direction in spite of allurement or obstacle. If this were in no sense true, our ideas of the reasonableness of the world we live in would get a sad shock. It is not that we feel that a long life of faithful Christian living deserves recognition and blessing at God's hand. We are fully aware that none of us deserves anything, since "all is of God," and we have nothing that we have not received. But our feeling that the world is under the beneficent law of cause and effect requires us to believe that continued Christian fidelity actually does something for and in the Christian, leaves a noble, valuable, glorious deposit in the soul, a "good foundation against the day" of temptation, trial, judgment.

Yet there certainly is another glorious fact of the grace of Christ which fills every Christian heart with adoring wonder and confident gladness. It is the fact of the present grace of our Lord Jesus, which, if we will but open wide enough the gates of appropriating faith, will flow in with its power and lift us over spiritual obstacles, give us strength for the duty before us, make us "more than conquerors through him that loved us." That mighty

strength is greater than all our habit, greater than all our impulses for God and good. We have Christ and all his riches at hand. Why go to our poor little deposit of right inclinations and habits, and not straight to the deep ocean of his grace?

But there is no real contradiction between the two views of the Christian life. If there were, there can be no doubt which the Christian would choose, growth or grace. The arm that rolls the worlds along is the arm to trust. And what "sinner, saved by grace," would not rather choose to take his salvation from the dear hand of the Beloved than attempt to win it for himself? But we do not need to choose between growth and grace. We do not need to deny one or the other; we may and we must include both in our scheme of things, letting them side by side bear us on to our goal. We can, if we will, see how blessedly they intertwine and interact.

"Grace" must always precede "growth." That is certain. The first impulse to the acts that make the holy habit, and the continuance of impulses that make one act follow another in happy succession, come from God, and are appropriated by faith. It was that inflooding of the soul by the love and might of God when we opened our hearts to Christ that gave us power to do the first faithful act, and also to do all the following right things; and we cannot move one step forward without it. The minute we attempt this we fail. Furthermore, as the image on the sensitive plate will be lost unless the "fixing" solution flows over it, our habits for good will be but superficial and transitory unless they are set into our being by the power of the Spirit of God. And without it they will not get into the realm of regenerated spirit at all, since "that which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit." We never grow *into* grace.

But growth is God's own appointed means, in the very nature of things, whereby the blessed results of grace are conserved. We say that we are never given grace enough for any more than the present need. That is true, and not true. Picture the soul under God's protecting grace, as some very fragile and perishable thing flooded by some protecting liquid, which neutralizes and shuts off the infecting, destructive air without. That effect is like the immediate triumph of the soul which, by appropriating faith, has entered into Christ. Picture that fragile substance, also drinking into itself the protecting liquid, till with each submersion there have been left in it many particles of the wondrous liquid. The opening of the pores of the soul, by which the golden flood enters into its depths, comes from its acts of faith; the deposit is holy habit. It is a thought full of cheer that with successive acts of faith we are knitting our souls more firmly to Jesus Christ, that he grows daily more intertwined with our deepest being, more powerfully dwells within.

Growth is not only a deposit in the soul; it is an enlargement of the spirit's pores which enables us to take in ever more and more of the grace that enfolds us in its ocean fulness. We had grace up to our capacity yesterday, but grace received up to our capacity never leaves us with that same capacity. Our full pint cup today, by that very fulness, can hold more than a pint tomorrow. We are not metals, but men, and are splendidly expansible. This is true in every realm of nature—why should it not "more abound" in grace? In such fashion the body's muscles grow; thus the mind's grasp widens; just so the heart that loves to its utmost power all it can love today can love more intensely more people tomorrow. And the practised Christ-lover, Christ-believer, Christ-receiver, how blessedly he exemplifies the Master's words,

"To him that hath shall be given, and he shall have abundance"! The newcomer, who also has learned the secret of great faith, can get all he needs and can contain; but the sweetness that Christ's look brings to the lifelong friend he cannot at the start quite know. The same love, a different heart; each heart full.

Growth makes the experienced lover; it also makes the veteran soldier. It means steadiness, precision, sufficiency for the occasion. Christ is no nearer at hand to the veteran than to the recruit; his love certainly yearns over him no more; but the veteran knows better how to get at those founts of power. He is "exercised unto godliness"; he has been "instructed how to be abased, and how to abound." His love, by practise, "abounds yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment," so that he can both "discriminate the things that differ" and "approve the things that are excellent." Temptation cannot so readily surprise him, opportunity so often find him unready, assaults drive him from his base. He is no better patriot, but a far better soldier. Apparently the only way to make veteran virtue is the habit of long service.

And there is one service which the law of habit must and does often render for each one of us. We are in the flesh; and if it were left entirely to the present faith and obedience to give us victory, Satan would have another trophy. Fainting, or faulty, or forgetful, we would fail to appropriate the present power of the present Christ. Almost incredible that it should be so; but so it is, or would be if it were not for acquired spiritual momentum.

On the other hand, say what we will about the holy habit, the indwelling Christ must be made real to us in the present moment by the present act of faith. Habit is no delusion, to be sure; but if habit is to be vital, and bear vital fruit, it must be reimpregnated, recharged, re-

vivified, by the surrounding and infiltrating atmosphere of the Spirit of God. There is no past grace. If it is past, it is no longer grace. The just cannot live by memory, they cannot live by habit only, they must live by faith. Abraham's faith was not alone the one great initial act of trust that gave him the pardon and the promise; it was the *habit* of faith that kept him moving in his obedience. The faith of Hebrews 11 is the faith that walks the weary miles as well as that which "steps over the line." So the "holy habit" which means Christian stability and Christian growth is neither more nor less than the habit of faith: faith disciplined in the surrender and exercise of will, faith disciplined in the reception of Christ's grace. We can with confidence let the law of habit work *for* us, but what we need to work *at* is our present faith. Our duty and our power are never in the past, never in the future, only in the present. We must never recline on last year's habit when we ought to fight on with this day's power and gloriously experience this moment's blessing. Our dependence must not be on inbuilt habit, but on the inbuilt and now inbuilding Christ.

Sometimes a piece of wood buried in the earth is surrounded and saturated by heavy solutions of crystal. No atmospheric decay can reach it; but, in the presence of the potent liquid, particle by particle disolves, and particle by particle the crystal takes its place, till at last the wood is gone, transformed into a jewel. Ours to keep ourselves by faith, which is obedience and appropriation, under that transforming flood, even our Christ. His to see that the law of habit works, and that through it we, "reflecting as a mirror the glory of the Lord, are transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord the Spirit." Not "growth or grace," but growth in grace, is our story.

VII

NOT AS BEATING THE AIR

" Shadow-boxing " may be a good thing for elderly gentlemen of sedentary occupation who must have some mild exercise to keep the body supple and promote digestion. But in the serious business of life there is nothing quite so disheartening as to deliver a blow with the intention of having it terminate with effect upon some object, and find it meeting nothing but the surrounding air. That is an anticlimax which takes the zest out of that particular detail; and if it becomes a habit it will take hope, buoyancy, and courage out of life.

And yet to every worker in mankind's great factory, every warrior on God's battle-field, that teasing, sickening, almost prostrating sense of futility comes again and again. Just to have a graceful courtesy on the street spend itself without response brings an annoying " sheepishness " to the feeling if not to the face; but to summon all your thought, all your strength, all your heart-force, all the best that is in you, and lovingly launch it against some soul or some situation, and then to have you and it fall flat and helpless, the goal unreached, your work perhaps not given even the poor compliment of earnest rejection—what a shock it brings! And how common it is! Every teacher feels it, unless rarely " fortunate," every reformer, every soul who sees a vision or feels a high emotion the world has not yet seen or felt. Ezekiel " lets his whole soul go abroad " in poetic and passionate exhortation for God, and he is unto the people he would serve " as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice,

and can play well on an instrument." The preacher, heart on fire with zeal for God and man, draws his crowds, and competes with the latest opera singer for the popular favor. The philosopher, announcing a teaching that he thinks should revolutionize the world's living, shares for his little moment the vaudeville stage of its attention with some flashy "best seller." Ruskin spends a whole life in passionate endeavor for higher things in art and thought and act, and feels at its close as if he had been bombarding the vagrant breeze.

No man can take satisfaction in that. He cannot even find refuge in "the joy of the workman." Suppose it *was* elegantly, scientifically, artistically done? Suppose it *had* the glorious merit of "dead earnestness," the splendor of a whole manhood put into it? It was futile nevertheless.

When that feeling comes upon a worker his first step ought to be a candid and severe inquiry whether, after all, it is not actually deserved. The results of my labor are as if I had been beating the air. Well, have I not been? Not every investment is a wise one. Not every blow is well aimed. All the salesmanship in the world will be futile, selling snow-plows in Egypt. Has that labor of ours chosen its object wisely, studied its situation shrewdly, pursued its campaign thoughtfully, aimed its blows skilfully? Instead of complaining of God, fate, and the public, ought I not to be sending up the prayer, "God be merciful to me, a fool"? Was not my toil like the thrashing arms of the windmill?

Perhaps we can plead "not guilty" to all that. We did put into our work all the care, thought, human wisdom, we could muster, yes, and divine grace appropriated by faith—and yet!

Shall we not remember that this sense of futility, of ex-

pending our all and seeing it dissipate in thin air, is the price that every man who ever moved his fellows upward has often had to pay? And that after he died generations have passed before his success appeared? At no less cost can the world's progress into light be purchased. It is a part of what we might, but will not, call the "beneficent lottery of life," that a great share of our labor must be tentative, partial, fruitless, before the great prizes of advance, either by God or man, are won.

We say that God is the Great Economist. And so he is. The hairs of your head are all numbered. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without your Father. "Not a worm is cloven in vain." But, looked at from our side and from the present, God is the great, reckless Spender. He has abundance for all sorts of "experiments." And he uses them. "Of fifty seeds" he "brings but one to bear." So many struggling advance guards and pioneers of reform die in front of the breastworks before the main army sweeps the fort. So many pole-seekers perish on the floes before Peary plants his flag on the roof of the world. So many wavelets leap up and fall back before the tide consumes the shore. So many midnight and morning stars of prophecy before the Day Star dawns. Of the kingdom sower's seed, three portions produce no crop. But "in due season we shall reap, if we faint not"; not "may," but "shall."

For it is not a lottery. God is the great Spender, not the great Gamester. There is no chance about it. His dice are loaded with his omnipotent will. And—what his word and our faith can assure us, if narrow-visioned science cannot prove—there has been no waste about it. He is the great Spender, not the great Spendthrift. The futility was in our feeling, not in the fact. Working under his guidance, we did not beat the air. His great machine

is not a beneficent lottery, but a beneficent loom, in which not one thread, faithfully placed by the loving hands of those who serve him, has ever been lost. For he has not left those hands alone. What they placed, he placed.

The first ice crystals that shot across the water's surface were brushed away, but out of their fragments, or out of water chilled by their death, the new crystals were formed that made winter's granite pavement over which the armies marched. The cavalry reconnaissance was blown to the winds, or sped on and seemed to leave no trace, but the conquering infantry swept over the space they had prepared. Savonarola, Huss, Wycliffe, fail, but they blaze paths for Luther's coming.

And we need not always wait so long or delve so deep. The real fruitfulness of some of our seemingly most unfruitful labor will appear to our own eyes, and not indirectly, if we will only wait long enough—a "little while." God gives us, again and again, blessed present proofs that when we worked with him we could not work in vain. These loving admonitions, these tender influences, this Christian instruction into which we put so much thought, care, heart's blood—do we think it all "slipped like water off a duck's back" from the mind of that careless boy? That mind and conscience was not so careless as it seemed. Your seed stuck. Five, ten, thirty years later the blossom and the fruit appeared. Who told you that your harvest would come next week?

Yet think, believe, hope as you can, does it sometimes seem wholly fruitless? Does neither sight nor faith, in some given case, reveal any profit? Well, if in that case there is and shall be no outward human profit, you have not beaten the air. Your blow is registered, registered blessedly, registered eternally. It is registered in God. You rejoiced his heart. You expressed once more his love

and goodness. You showed him that he had still another son, the image so far of the Only Begotten, for you had, like him, caused your rain to fall, your sun to shine, upon the just and upon the unjust. Your arrow of love found the highest, the central, mark of the universe, the heart of God.

VIII

"NOT AS UNCERTAINLY"

Is not uncertain running the prime cause of most of the failures in life's race? It is not the cause of all. There are some who know perfectly just what they want to reach, have definitely conceived just how they are to reach it, follow out their chosen path with zeal, ability, and determination; but because the thing they seek is contrary to the great laws that bind the world of men together, contrary to the great forces of God, they are foredoomed to complete and pathetic disappointment. And others, selecting their aim, planning their path, pushing their progress, attain precisely what they set out for, and in that attainment register life's most tragic failure; success in an unworthy aim.

But with most of the unsuccessful lives, uncertain running is the secret; and uncertainty is from two great causes. The first is the lack of a definite, practical, worthy, "long-distance" objective. These people live either treadmill lives or derelict lives, or both. The old horse in the old-fashioned hay-press or brick-machine had plenty of motion, such as it was, and traveled, even at his lazy gait, many miles a day; but he "ended up" at night just where he began in the morning, because the long shaft to which he was fastened was itself fastened at the other end, and kept him going in a circle. It would be humiliating to try to guess what proportion of our fellow men spend all their days in this contracted circle of daily needs, supplies, duties, little pleasures, without ever questioning about the meaning or the profit of it all; or, if they do for a moment

question, without having the independence to rise somehow, sight a distant goal, and get their bearings on the way. Derelict lives, on the other hand, simply go where the stronger influences propel, unconscious of the direction, without any attempt to determine it, following the line of least resistance, yielding to the push of greater pressure.

Sometimes the whole being moves in one direction, sometimes the drifting life becomes the unhappy victim of internal war. A certain ocean derelict of the Atlantic recently parted amidships under the assault of a fearful storm, and the two sections drifted, one north, one south, till they were four hundred and fifty miles apart. One of them rose higher from the surface, and the push of the winds prevailed against the opposite pull of the currents; the other was sunk deeper in the water, and the currents prevailed against the winds. The derelict *life* must finally yield to the one or the other, but it has an unhappy history while the struggle lasts, and an unhappier, if less stormy, one after it is decided. The derelict life may not always be a treadmill life; the forces that overmaster it may also overmaster all regularity; but the treadmill life is always a derelict life; underneath its routine it is invariably and inevitably drifting at the sway of forces unseen, uncomprehended, unfelt.

The difference between the savage and the civilized man —and every one who is the creature of impulse is so far savage—is that the savage's objective is either lacking entirely, in which case he is not higher than the animal; or it concerns itself with a few physical needs or lower impulses—three meals a day, or the claims of "love," vanity, or war. The civilized man has chosen a higher, less tangible, more distant goal, and pursues it with thoughtfulness, self-restraint, self-propelling energy, and determination. Mists, clouds, islands, mountains, may hide his

goal from him for hours, days, weeks, years; the storms may blow him far out of his track, currents tug at him, or oppose him with imperious force; but he steers right on, he sees his star with his mind if he cannot with his eye. And the great difference, from this point of view, between the Christian and the worldling is that the one has chosen a merely temporal objective, while the other has chosen the eternal and the spiritual, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God.

The second great cause of uncertain running is in the lack of the proper or effective "short-distance" objective. Any life that is without the farther objective may have some of the nearer ones, but it cannot have the right ones. If a man has no distant port for which he steers, or the wrong one, he is sure, however systematic and "practical" his mind may be, to lay out the intervening stretches wrongly. One of the saddest things in life is when some man, clearly equipped with all the mental power, thoughtfulness, and ingenuity to drive him gloriously to some worthy end, is nevertheless drifting at mercy of wind and waves or resolutely steering just opposite to where he ought to go. Yet it is easily possible to have the clearest sort of a vision of what we ought to aim at, and to have all the intention in the world of actually aiming at it, and then to miss it, because we fail to find or follow the intermediate program.

Too often we mistake a day-dream for an ambition. A day-dream is a wish, very slightly accompanied by a will, and entirely unaccompanied by a way. The makers of things have had not only a perception and a purpose, but a program. They see not only the shining mountains, but they see also the great outlines, and, as each day calls for them, the immediate details of the sandy, miry, stony, dizzy path between. "Visionary" does not mean "the man

with a vision," it means the man with a distant vision but no near ones, a vision of ends, but no vision of means. No such marvelous dream of empire ever thrilled a human brain as that which Jesus had; but he was no mere dreamer, for he had laid out the path he and his followers must take to bring him to that throne of universal power.

Where we fail very often is in our inability to see just where and how the daily duty and living can advance us toward our goal. We have our day-dreams of holiness and Christlikeness and power, but the exact connection between the dull routine of life and these splendid summons we are unable to make, either in thought or act. Life looks so much like a tread-mill, or we seem so much in the hands of wind and tide. But if we will recognize in every duty, of whatever sort, a spiritual opportunity, and in every opportunity a spiritual challenge, and in every contact with our fellow men a spiritual invitation to some sort of Christian influence and usefulness, we shall find indeed that "the trivial round, the common task, will furnish all we ought to ask." But it will not furnish it without a continued uplook to the shining goal, and every now and then a definite resurvey of the intermediate path, and the definite setting up of new intermediate goals we are seeking to reach. For we are always in danger of being swamped in detail, "not seeing the forest for the trees." The star we are not every moment steering by is no real pilot star for us. How we need the moments for reflection, the "tower-room" hours, the days when we can refresh our ideals, reaffirm our purposes, get a fresh look at our maps, go over again our marching orders, our "plans and specifications." get a view of the world in the light of the vision of Jesus. "Tell me the story often, for I forget so soon." No runner can safely look aside. Other things,

other runners, must neither be allowed to impede his steps or deplete his forward pushing energy.

This concentration does not at all mean selfishness. When we are in the path of Christian love, thoughtfulness, unselfish service, we are in the straight track of the Christian race, moving faster than ever toward the mark. But the lower ideals, the subtle attraction of other wills powerfully moving in their self-chosen, self-seeking directions, the innumerable fascinating calls of the world, the flesh, and the devil, tend greatly to confuse the stoutest and most single-hearted runner.

The cure? Compounded of God's grace, which is ever the root and moving force of all, and of our simple-hearted, appropriating faith. It may be hard to say which is the most effective Scripture recipe for this all-conquering Christian steadiness. But there will be no doubt of that man's reaching the goal, no matter what the obstacles or distractions or native inner weakness, who will follow out this word: "Therefore let us also, seeing we are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses [racers who have run the race ahead of us and gloriously testified by life and word the saving power of Christ], lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith."

That is running "as not uncertainly."

IX

"STUNTS" AND "STINTS"

There is a legitimate place in life for "stunts," those spectacular exhibitions of strength, skill, or endurance. They are alluring to the young, and not without a proper attraction for older ones. He who has lost interest in them, or the impulse to them, has had die away within him the elastic spring of enjoyment and achievement. Blessed is he who can still be stirred by, or better, to, a "stunt."

"Stunts" are the natural expression of youth, and of abounding energy, whether youthful or not. To put forth our own power in harmonious and delightful exercise is an innocent pleasure—the joy of living. It is a tonic thing to set before oneself a beckoning, onward leading mark of skill and power in some chosen activity. Foresight, patience, temperance, prudence, diligence, persistence, are called for and called forth by the long effort to bring eye or ear or hand or muscle to the point where it can go through some particular evolution with power, precision, ease.

And yet, is there not a more excellent way? "Stunts" are useful, delightful, exhilarating; but are they not too often the mere fringes on the garment of performance? Garments need not be devoid of fringes; they probably ought not to be; but a garment all fringes, or chiefly fringes, would be a sleazy fabric. The way of the homely, drudging "stint" is the way of solid victory, the very warp and woof of life. The "stint" is a task set, a certain definite amount of achievement aimed at, so many machines completed, so many garments finished, so many acres of

ground plowed. Its purpose is not exhibition or admiration or the envy of others or the gratification of self; it is often an achievement which has no witnesses but ourselves and God. It usually lacks the applause of the multitude, the spur of emulation, the stimulus of excitement, the allure of an outward prize. It is a steady, quiet, determined sort of performance which seems, and is, the sturdy plodding of a cart-horse, stolid hoofs pounding hard ground in successive monotonous blows, rather than the swift, rushing, musical strides of the racer, singing a triumphant song of quick-won victory.

No one can doubt that this is what gets the world's solidest work done. Wars are not decided by the brilliant battle-hours nearly so much as by the digging and the ditching, the slow plodding, the infinite detail before and after. What moves humanity along is the daily task, keeping at it day in and day out. Which army in war can give and take the most of steady pounding?—that is the decisive question. " Stints " are the wheat; " stunts," very often, are " the idle poppies in among the corn." " Stints " are the heavy artillery, the stedfast infantry, of conquest; " stunts " are the caracoling cavalry, the eye-dazzling aeroplanes. Not Samson, the man of " stunts," but Samuel, the man of " stints," is the builder of Israel.

Skill is, of course, a real achievement, a prize gloriously worth striving for; yet skill, as the direct and chief object of endeavor, somehow does not satisfy the real and deeper craving of the soul, which is to get something actually worth while actually done. That is the reason why we cannot take very lasting satisfaction in mere gymnastics, mere athletics. It is child's play, boy's work, after all—earnest trifling. That pretty skill in keeping three balls in the air at once we good-naturedly admire, but when is the man going to begin keeping three *irons* in the fire at

once, and beating them into articles of use and beauty? "Wonderful," we seem to say, "but what of it? You have whirled your Indian clubs around for three hours; let us see the watch, or the washboard, or even the clothespin, that results from all that labor!" "Skill," you answer, "was what I aimed for." "Very well," we reply, "skill is worth while; but skill finds its end and aim and expression in something more tangible than graceful or powerful 'passes' in the atmosphere. Let us see your enduring product. It may be mental, or spiritual, and not material; but what actual changes have you wrought in God's world and in the souls of men?"

The "stunt" develops certain elements of character, but it cannot compare with the "stint" for that. Every admirable thing that the "stunt" develops, the "stint" yet more, and a whole world of quality which the "stunt" never can. These spectacular feats, these things which have skill for their aim, call out and call forth will and patience and persistence; but the quiet, steady pushing of a definite task calls for all these and more; and gives more too. The highest power, the highest finish, never comes to the "stunt-doer" till he has ceased to be a "stunt-doer" and has become a "stint-worker," till he loses sight of skill as a prime end and forgets himself in actual production; in other words, till the "amateur" becomes the "professional," till "athletics" ceases to be an avocation and becomes a business. The finest amateur always lacks the finish, ease, solidity, real skill, of the professional; practise pugilism never has the "punch" of the real (though that particular punch can well be dispensed with).

But after all, may these two things not be brought together in one act? May not both unite in giving to what we do its true and piquant flavor and its real solidity and worth? Both elements are essential for the best growth of

the soul. Times come when the faithful plodding must be supplemented by the quick dash, the deed of daring in which all the soul's powers go forth in high and splendid exercise. The fort must be taken, the spurt must be made, Jonathan and his armor-bearer must inspire Israel. The ordered heart-beat is the staple, acceleration now and then shoots through the soul a generous fire that oxygenates every drop of blood, burns out the sluggishness, sets aflame the zeal and enthusiasm.

Why not make every " stunt " a " stint," a thing that represents steady purpose, will, fidelity, a thing that is a part of life's ordered scheme, bringing us nearer the goal because it covers just so much of the ground between? And why not make every " stint " a " stunt," putting into it the intense energy, the heightened speed, the heart and soul, the manly pride, the generous enthusiasm of the race and the exhibition hall? It *is* a " stunt." It is the one thing we are set to do in that moment, before the most august audience the universe can show. Not the assembled representatives of Greece, as at the Olympic games, not the applauding crowd of the amphitheater, not Napoleon's " forty centuries looking down from the pyramids "; but the cloud of fellow witnesses for Jesus, the angelic hosts, the spirits of just men made perfect, and supremely, Jesus, our Forerunner, our File-leader, the Great Taskmaster in whose eye all our work is done.

Awake, my soul, stretch every nerve,
  And press with vigor on;
A heavenly race demands thy zeal,
  And an immortal crown!

Blest Saviour, introduced by thee,
  Have I my race begun;
And, crowned with victory, at thy feet
  I'll lay my honors down!

X

THE CHRISTIAN'S SECRET OF "CONTENT"

The American Standard Version, usually so admirable, has not been perfectly happy in the rendering of Paul's great saying, "I have learned, in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content." In fact, no one English word can adequately give the meaning of the word translated "content." The Twentieth Century New Testament, so often a paraphrase rather than a translation, uses a whole phrase —"equal to the emergency"; but Paul was "equal" to many more things than "emerged"; he had learned the more difficult art of being equal to the things that do not emerge. Dean Alford, in his great Greek Testament, suggests "competent"; but "competent" is a cold, superficial, external sort of word compared with the deep inferior fulness that Paul has in mind.

His word is the old Stoic *autarkes,* "self-sufficing," but without the austere, "dour," unlovely implications of the Stoic idea, and with a glorious fulness of Christian meaning.

The Stoic thought was that the superior man should be able to find his strength, satisfaction, power, in himself, entirely independent of things, events, people. His soul was not "a lighthouse keeper," but a "light housekeeper," on an island. He achieved this *autarkeia,* "self-sufficingness," by a mental and volitional declaration of independence, by reducing to a minimum his so-called "needs," by suppressing his emotions and desires, by refusing to lean on other people, by drawing on his own inward sources of strength, by holding himself within the leash and

harness of a masculine will. The idea has much attraction for robust minds, such as we all ought to have. In such minds it certainly produced strong, effective characters, characters which, sometimes, superficially resembled some Christian ideals; yet how far from Christianity's real and potent and gracious life!

The Stoic conception meant austerity, lack of sympathy, narrowness, lack of real height, for it usually went no higher than the man himself. It was too apt to produce an unlovely pride, a self-conceit that smelled to high heaven, and would make any angel weep. And it was so shallow, never going deeper than the man himself.

What was Paul's idea? Like the Stoic's in many ways. Stoicism, in some things, was admirable, up to its limits. An infusion of really Christian Stoicism is one of the finest furnishings a soul can be given as it starts out on its journey in a world of pricks and stings, of minor and major sufferings. What Paul learned was not to be dependent on anything external for his mental and spiritual poise, to find within himself a satisfaction and a strength which would keep him from losing his balance in the onset of trouble, from being inflated by the presence of prosperity, and from the depressing sense of privation and loss when confronted by the absence of the desirable. He knew how to abound, and be in want, how to be exalted, how to be abased, because he had in him that which was better than anything that could come from without, and whose presence more than made up for the things that were lacking.

His "self-sufficingness" was not achieved by the suppression of his emotions. His soul was a seismograph, anemometer, electrometer, sensitive beyond description, sensitive, but for the secret he had learned, beyond endurance. "I travail again for you." "Who is caused to

stumble, and I burn not?" It did not come by his cutting off his capacity for enjoyment, his needs, his tastes, legitimate appetites. That is a semisuicidal method, whereby the Stoic thought to make himself more of a man by becoming less of a man.

Paul had not learned indifference; the things the Philippians sent were good principally for what they showed, but they were also good in themselves. He knew, and knew intensely, the difference between comfort and discomfort, satisfaction and hunger. His secret was not an impalpable sort of chloroform, numbing the senses and the perception by paralyzing the nerve-centers or the nerve-ends. Nor had Paul issued a dour Stoic declaration of independence of other souls. If they did well, he "lived." If they went wrong, it went to his heart. If they showed him love, his grateful soul overflowed with pæans. Usually he prided himself on burdening no man, on taking no man's money, earning his own way, but when sudden need came, as in Thessalonica, and now in the Roman prison when self-support was impossible, he leaned, as frankly, as lovingly, as joyously, as proudly, as Jesus did on his loved one's bounty, not alone because, as was the fact, he was giving infinitely more than he was getting, but also because love is too big to be ashamed of dependence; it even delights in the gracious fruit the loved one is bearing, in the gift.

The supreme difference between Paul's *autarkeia* and the Stoics' was that his was not pumped up out of his own inner consciousness by a mental achievement, a masterly syllogism, or from the fountains of his own inward strength by a forthput of his will. The Stoic, like some men today, might some way despise him for that fact, for an *autarkeia* which was really a *hetero-arkeia,* "sufficiency in another." But Paul was under no delusions or illusions

about himself. He had as honorable a history of self-control as any Stoic ever had, a record of rising above want, need, suffering, no Stoic ever surpassed. But he had no conception that he was God, or a part of God, a little fragment of deity who had only to go down into the depths of his own being to find all he wanted; he knew that "in me, that is, in my flesh, dwelleth no good thing"; he knew himself for what he was, just a man, a poor, created, dependent thing, a "parasite," if we may use so bold a term, on the complex forces and facts around him, who could not of himself live one second an independent life. Yet he could face everything which could confront him with a heart serene, with a joy unconquerable. He had learned a secret!

The difference between the Stoic, or any other kind of human sufficiency, and such as Paul's, is simply this: The Stoic is an island, Paul was a fountain. The island is narrow, limited, soon exhausted. Paul's life, at its base and source, had an intake channel, through which all the forces of the divine flowed up at need: "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Paul's *autarkeia* was *Christarkeia*. This was what could flood drouth with its own life-giving streams, could fill him with joy when every outward circumstance called for tears, could be society in loneliness, food of the soul which could make the scantiest body food suffice. How long it had taken Paul to be initiated into that fraternity, through what course of training he had to pass, is another story. But he had learned, "In whatsoever things I am, I have sufficiency in myself, for I have Jesus."

In the old Norse legend they gave one of the gods a mighty horn to drain dry. But with all his puissant efforts, he could lower its surface a little, and the flood came back to its former height. The humiliated deity was com-

forted, however, when they told him that the horn communicated with the ocean, and though he had not been able to drink the ocean dry, his mighty draughts had caused the tides. There are no tides in the ocean with which Paul's life communicates. "Every one that drinketh of this water shall thirst again: . . but the water that I shall give him shall become in him a well of water springing up unto eternal life": nay, more, "from within him shall flow rivers of living water."

XI

SHALL CHRISTIANS WORK FOR WAGES?

Is there not sometimes an uneasy wish that the reward element could have been left out of the religion of Christ? Do we not have an inward sympathy with the old woman in the legend who was seen with a pail of water and a torch, the torch to burn up heaven, and the water to quench hell, that henceforth men might serve God for himself alone? The thought of reward for the service of God seems selfish, earthly, mercenary, a motive which adult religion ought to have outgrown. God for God's sake, and virtue for virtue's sake. "What seekest thou in virtue?" "Herself, for she is her own reward."

But any examination reveals how intimately inwoven in Christianity is this conception of reward, of wages, for fidelity and truth and honor. The old Judaism, like every other religion, is full of it. Every New Testament writing directly or indirectly contains it. And our Lord's teaching, from the Sermon on the Mount to the words in the Upper Room, and in the messages of the risen and enthroned Redeemer through the seer of the Revelation, rings the changes upon it in every conceivable fashion. "What thank have ye?" seems a fundamental note. To every beatitude is affixed its reward—if indeed the reward is not the beatitude. No great act, no slightest act, shall miss its appropriate recompense. It shall come from men: "good measure, pressed down, shaken together, and running over"; and it shall come from God, who shall say: "Well done, good and faithful servant; enter thou into the joy of thy Lord"; "thou hast been faithful over a few

things: I will make thee ruler over many things." At the end of faithfulness is the white stone, the new name, the crown of life, pillarhood in the temple of our God. As easily extract the life from the vine and leave it living and fruitful, as the recompense element from the teachings of Christ and his apostles.

And as profitably, for we should be eliminating from the religion of Jesus one of the most fundamental and necessary factors in its power and reasonableness. Christianity is a divine instrument of salvation, a rope, so to say, let down out of heaven whereby men may climb heavenward. (To say this, one need not forget that salvation is the free gift of God through Jesus Christ our Lord; but it also opens to us the process of realizing the full fruits of salvation.) To leave out the reward element would be to present to men only the upper reaches of that rope, not approaching within a thousand miles of the lowly level where they live; a system of salvation which has a summit, but no base, which expects of its novices what only its highest adepts could attain. A religion without reward is conceivably a religion of spotless angels, unfallen seraphs, who do good absolutely from a sense of right, and serve God only because it is God's will, without hope or desire of any recompense. To reach to us men, God's rope must get down to where we are, and reenforce our poor, feeble, failing recognition of good by every legitimate means within the range of divine love and ingenuity, every lure whereby grace can entice its earth-bound children upward. Certainly, for his weak and imperfect servants, the God who has attached to every legitimate earthly need and activity of man its appropriate pleasure and delight, will seek to allure them also heavenward by assuring them that each thing done for him will have its fitting blessing hereafter, as well as here.

But are there not strong souls, who may be expected to serve God without such hope? We cannot include Paul among them. To him it was an assuring thought that in due season we shall reap, if we faint not, and that God will render to every man according to his work: to them that by stedfastness in well-doing seek after glory and honor and incorruption, eternal life. What human virtue is strong enough not to be the stronger for the gracious promises of an approving God? If we accept the testimony of Hebrews we follow One who in his earthly life, " for the joy that was set before him, endured the cross "; and, like Moses, " looked unto the recompense of reward." Assuredly he looked away with exceeding longing to the day when he should see of the travail of his soul and be satisfied, to the day of his triumph and his throne.

In fact, the strong soul, the strongest soul, must consider this question of reward, because it is intimately associated with two things: with the justice of God, in assigning to virtue its fitting consequence; and with his wisdom, in the unfailing operation of the law of cause and effect. Labor must produce its appropriate result, or justice and consequence totter from their throne. When Christ in me puts forth energy, sacrifice, toil, love, surrender, he (and that means I) must reap, else I am in a foolish world, or he has done a foolish thing. Travail like Christ's must have its satisfaction, or all reason is mocked. Any strong soul must ask reverently of God: " Shall my life bear interest? Shall cause produce effect? " Reward is result.

There is justification for the feeling against the reward element, but the ground of criticism is not in the existence of the reward, but in its supposed nature. Whatever reward has the earthly factor in it, the self factor, the mere physical, social, emotional, is so far unworthy of full-grown, adult religion. Along that salvation-rope of his

from heaven to earth God has attached the various recompenses appropriate to each foot of the ascent. Down there on the earth-level, the baby-level, the young-convert level, are the rewards that appeal to us there; they are not yet very noble; the angels may smile. We want peace of mind, we want salvation from hell, applause, ease in well-doing, thrills; cakes for children. As we climb, or, to drop the figure, as we advance in spiritual knowledge, love, power, our desire for reward drops one by one these earthly coverings, which were like the various temporary parts of flower and seed, and approaches nearer and nearer the pure essence, the life-germ, of true reward, until, the upmost round of the ladder gained, the earthly, selfish, partial has gone, and we now look for a reward the desire for which is the noblest aspiration of created being.

And what is that? It may be inferred from what we know of the aims of our Master, and of his noblest servant, Paul. What was the joy that was set before them? It seems to have consisted of three things.

The first was *completeness of being.* With Paul it was completeness in Christ; with the man Jesus it was completeness in the Father, the "glory which I had with thee before the world was"; with Paul, fulness attained; with the man Jesus, divine fulness (again) expressed. No man need feel that he is hungering after, seeking after, a selfish thing, if for God's sake his whole soul reaches forward with yearning intensity to have all he can of God, be all he can for God. That ambition of his is God's ambition for him; and it was God's ambition before it was his.

A second thing before both Paul and our Lord was *winning the approval of,* yet not so much winning the approval as *stirring with pleasure,* the great heart of God. "My meat," and highest pleasure, is to do his will. It was the thought, not of stars in his own crown, but of

stars in Christ's crown, that moved the great apostle. To go to heaven with a record of so many souls saved through our efforts is not the lowest Christian motive nor the highest. To let the heart of Jesus realize the deepest satisfaction possible from such powers and opportunities as ours—has heaven any higher, or purer reward?

If it has, it is this: the joy of blessing others. Does it not seem evident that this was the joy that was set before our Lord? To sit on a throne of power and dignity was not a thing to be grasped, though it be the throne of the universe; but to let his life be, at the glad cost of blood and pangs unutterable, the channel through which God's love might flow in rescue and power into the sin-slain souls of men: that was "joy unspeakable and full of glory." And that, the throne of gracious heavenly influence, the throne of blessing, of life-giving power, is the throne which Christ invites us, through sacrifice and service, to ascend with him. Of longing for that recompense no man need be ashamed, for it is the longing to be in truth a son of the living God, to let him express himself with the utmost fulness possible through us: "Blessed; they shall be called sons of God."

"WHERE THE LIVES JOIN"

FAILURE

You failed. The soul you sought to win
For God and good, plunged into deeper sin,
Ribald, insulting, scoffing at your pain.
Once more God's passionate heart of mercy did attain
Its utterance in a human life, which reached life's loftiest
strain,
When in that high attempt, so piteously vain,
You failed.

You failed. The life you sought to save
From the chill clutches of the covetous grave
Slipped slowly through your agonizing hold.
Yet once again God's soundless love, his grace untold,
Spoke in that patient care each grief could but unfold,
Love's steady glow no chill could turn to cold.
You failed!

You failed. The cause you strove to advance,
A helpless plaything of the time's mischance,
Blocked by the selfish, blind, "un-thought" of men,
Wavered, fell backward, lost in fog and fen,
But here God's truth strode forth in human flesh again,
Filled full the dazzled eyes of angels, when
You failed!

—Philip Wendell Crannell.

XII

THE PASSION FOR SHARING

The desire to impart is normal in human nature. Human nature wants others to sit down with it at the feast of joy; it cannot be content to have, and see others not having. The desire may be very mild, a pleasant and vague benevolence, a forceless, sentimental good-will which never really gets the victory over opposing forces. It may be very intense, and then it is rightly called passion. As passion, it is found in most men at some times, in some at many times and for long times; it is found in the really full-grown Christian, either as an active, intense emotion, or as an imperious, deep-moving set of his being, at all times. The ingenuous child often has it. The mother's utter devotion, pushed beyond sharing to complete self-robbery, is a conspicuous instance. It is seen in high exercise in the enthusiastic young convert, who would have all others "know the dear Saviour I have found." The Pentecostal church exhibited it clearly. It possesses, rather than is possessed by, the good teacher and the propagandist. In our best modern philanthropy it pushes out to the poor, sick, helpless, in the beautiful, bountiful pulse-beats of Jesus' heart. The whole movement for the betterment and equalizing of social conditions has its best motive-power, and ought to have its guiding principles and flavor in this. Supremely it is found in the Christian educator, in the Christian soul-winner, in the flaming apostle of Jesus Christ, whom it drives over land and sea, through all perils, sufferings, endeavors, to all endurance. It is the triumph of brotherhood over egotism, of the angel

over the brute, of Christ over self. Normal Christian living, that is to say, normal human living, like Job, scorns to eat its morsel alone, and finds that any viand's finest flavor comes from the sharing.

Its roots are three. One is the conscious possession of something worth sharing. We may not think it quite, or nearly, worthy of him with whom we would participate; it may fall short of expressing all we feel; it is not half of what we want to do; but it is in some way desirable, an expression, though inadequate. And if it seems in any sense adequate, blessed, splendid, how anxious we are to give it! Just one thing will fan any Christian's feeble spark of mild good-will into a mighty incandescence—an adequate sense of the value of Jesus Christ to his own soul, a sense born of his own experience. That is why the "convert" often has it to an extent sometimes, though abnormally, lacking later. His religion settles into the humdrum; he loses its wonder; and so the ring of assurance dies out of his voice and the impulse for testimony grows weaker in his heart. But although the deeper Christian life may mean a somewhat different manifestation from the manifestation of those early days, it ought to be a mightier power at the roots of his being, youth's light wood-fire succeeded by maturity's steady anthracite.

Who can meditate on the gospel of the glory of God, reflect on its work for and in his own soul, mark its triumphs in the blessing of others, and not feel his heart almost ache with the desire to communicate? Of those his eyes have never seen, he will say with Paul: "So, as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you also that are in Rome. For I am not ashamed of the gospel; for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Of his own kinsmen who will not accept what he has to offer, he will say, "I have great

sorrow and unceasing pain in my heart." And of those who are his own in the Spirit, " I long to see you, that I may impart unto you some spiritual gift, . . that I with you may be comforted in you, each of us by the other's faith, both yours and mine."

Another root of this feeling is the joy of our own expression, and of the joyous response of these souls, long kindred, or just now made kindred. To want to feel again the thrill that came over you when you have succeeded in making that other soul a partner in the love of Christ, may be just a little below the pure passion of bestowing, but it belongs with it. Our Lord himself, we remember, for joy like that, endured and bore and accomplished. It is a holy thrill, and its repetition will fasten the appetite on us.

The deepest fount of this feeling is love, love for that other soul, implanted by the grace of God, fed by the indwelling Christ himself. The passion for sharing, in all its deep genuineness, can be found only in the nature in which the loving Christ has been placed at the very center of the being, displacing the absorptive, the accretive self. That outward set of the soul's current is love; that love comes only from the Christ; all other passion is superficial, transitory, imitative; it fails at the crises, and usually much earlier. This pushes a man to any lengths of effort or sacrifice to get that blessing to his fellow man. If any Christian is languid in his desire that all his friends, all his neighbors, all the world, should be as himself, " except these bonds," he is not enjoying a very delightsome religion, or fails to sympathize with Jesus Christ, or—the inevitable cause of the other two—the Christ life in him is at a very low ebb.

How far shall this passion go? Physically, materially, so far that the man has nothing left for himself, as with

so many a mother? Perhaps not usually; there is a duty to self, not as self, but as an effective servant and steward of God; yet who shall stand and mark out the line beyond which even such self-devotement really does go too far? Indulgent Christianity begins to mark it all too soon. In the spiritual things, can it ever be excessive? What intensity of emotion can do more than justice, can do justice even, to the need of men, the glories of salvation, the yearning love of Christ? He who is not driven on by an enthusiasm which some call fanaticism is no close follower of him whose friends and kinsfolk would constrain him because, they say, "He is beside himself." But there is no danger of self-deprivation here. "Religion is a commodity of which the more we export, the more we have left at home."

It is the need of our hour. With this in control, no parent could touch his child in closest contact in every other conceivable thing, and in religion hold back the flood of yearning, agonizing love. Who, amid the city's moving crowds, could see the eager, restless, dissatisfied faces, sin-scored, polluted, and restrain the irrepressible tide of loving testimony, eager invitation? How can we picture the vast, tortured sea of heathenism, tossing its waves of sin and woe up into the face of a pitying God, without an answering cry, "Here am I; send me"?

We see a little of what this passion can do, in convert zeal, in mother love, in human philanthropy, in social helpfulness, in apostolic flame; but why should these instances be so few and far between? Why should not the whole "ransomed church of God" be on fire? Which one of us ought to cease from an almost feverish, but really most sane, intensity of emotion and endeavor, until, as far as we can bring it to pass, no soul by our side lacks this world's needful goods while we have plenty, no soul is

without the light which shines into our minds, no soul on earth exists who has not been brought to share with us in Jesus Christ?

> Can we whose souls are lighted
> With wisdom from on high,
> Can we to men benighted
> The lamp of life deny?

"We do not well; this day is a day of good tidings, and we hold our peace."

XIII

GOD'S MIDDLEMEN

The middleman in trade and industry is not always popular. Sometimes he has taken advantage of his two-fold relationship to exact too heavy toll from both sides. Many would abolish him altogether. That would be unwise, and impossible. He is just as necessary as producer or maker; a product not yet at the consumer's door, not yet within his purchasing reach, is precisely as useful as a product not yet made, non-existent. Highly specialized ability and labor are demanded for highly specialized functions, and there will always be much need for these go-betweens. Society may take matters into her own hands, and instead of permitting free-lance middlemen, unregulated, unsupervised, and uncontrolled as to methods and profits, except by competition, she may make them public functionaries, official members of the committee of distribution. But middlemen of some kind, volunteer and independent, or official and controlled, society must have. They are essential organs of the body economic, social, religious.

They are always necessary where there is a supply and a demand, separated by a barrier or distance. God himself, in the working of his world, has not exempted himself from this necessity. When he would pour forth his blessings on mankind, he must do it through the heart, life, spirit, of his great Middleman, his Son, Jesus Christ.

The glory of our Christian work is that in it we are middlemen for God, channels, transmitters. Back of us lies the great storehouse of power, blessing, truth, God's

ocean fulness. It is ours to conduct the gracious floods where they will bless and fructify. On the Godward side also, we are middlemen, a kingdom of priests, not for sacrifices—the great High Priest has done that once for all—but for intercession, in our prayers bearing the needs of men up to the throne of grace. Our main mediation, however, is manward, bearing out to man what God pours forth.

We are middlemen of truth, getting from God the great, deep, lofty facts of his being, of man's nature and need, of his grace and its working, and bringing these in digestible, assimilable form to the people who need them, and who without our work, or work like ours, would never dream of, much less apprehend or comprehend, these truths.

We are middlemen of power, somehow getting souls to be aware of, hunger for, reach out after, grasp, the moral and spiritual strength God offers; middlemen of sympathy and love, conveying something of the throb of the infinite Heart whose longings to bless they have never perceived, perhaps not even dimly guessed; middlemen, in a word, of salvation. As definitely and distinctly as on "blue Tiberias' grassy bank," Jesus has put into our hands the Bread of Life, pointed to the souls around us, and said, "Give ye them to eat." "As the Father hath sent me, even so send I you."

We are standing, as the old preachers used to say, between the living and the dead, between the Living One, and the hungry, starving, dying or dead "many," human souls. Not the Son of God himself has a nobler privilege, in its measure. For that was precisely where he stood, himself the ladder on which God's angels were ascending with human prayers, needs, longings, and loves, and descending with divine messages and gifts. That, he felt,

was his one earthly significance. It is our one earthly significance.

We are middlemen, divinely appointed, not free-lance, volunteer, independent, self-profiting intermediaries, free and voluntary though our loving labor is. We have no option; a stewardship is intrusted to us, minister or layman, officer or private. Woe is unto us if we do not perform our blessed task.

We are middlemen only. We have no concern with original production. Even the so-called maker or producer is not really such; he simply mediates between the seed and the soil, between the material God furnishes and the shaping forces God also furnishes. Paul plants, Apollos waters, God gives the increase. No real spiritual results especially, were ever produced by us. They were "born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." Our one only mission is transmission. Nor need we concern ourselves about quantity. He will give them to eat through our hands so long as the need continues and our feet speed to do his will: "the unsearchable riches of Christ!" For three things we are responsible; keeping in touch with both parties, and furnishing an unchoked channel and a flowing stream of communication. He is no successful middleman who is not in closest, fullest, constant contact with the central source. He will simply mock the dumb mouths which stretch up to him and are not fed. Early in the Great War, many men eagerly took contracts, trusting later to "scare up" a supply, and found, to their chagrin, that they could not "deliver the goods." They never possessed what they had undertaken to give. The Christian middleman's danger is not that he will undertake to deliver truth and power and blessing of which he has never known anything, but he may forget to keep his stock up to normal fulness and

freshness, may let the Water of Life slip away from him little by little, until, instead of the rivers of living waters flowing from within him, there is only a little stagnant pool at the bottom of his soul, or, at best, but a scant trickle outward.

He must maintain also the closest, fullest, tenderest touch with the needy souls at the foot of the spiritual ladder; sympathetic touch, that he may comprehend their needs, and that they may welcome his help; intellectual touch, that there may be apprehension both in them and him; vital touch that the power proceeding from him may go forth. Can one be in full touch with God, and out of touch with man? In full touch, no. The danger is in the partial touch. It is as natural as it is for "nature to abhor a vacuum," that there should be a wide, and ever-widening, gap between the man who habitually walks with God, whose mind moves with informed and practised familiarity among the thoughts of the Spirit, and the man who is walking with God but little, or not at all, who at best is but a babe in things spiritual, and who may have never been spiritually born at all. But it is just that chasm which it is our business, as God's middlemen, to bridge. Whatever love, sympathy, study of the individual, and the most determined, ingenious effort to frame things for his comprehension and push things into his mind, can do, must be done. No slight touch on God can do that. God's fulness, filling God's channel, his servant, must flood through and fill that vacuum.

XIV

THE DUTY AND DANGERS OF LOVING DOWNWARD

"Jesus can safely love downward, but we cannot," the preacher said, touching the text, "Now unto him that loveth us and loosed us from our sins." His thought was right, but his words were wrong. We too can safely love downward, if we will love as Jesus loves. If "loving downward" means love in the lower sense, dwelling habitually in our desires and delights on a lower level than our best, the level of imperfect aspirations, worldly tastes, sensual and selfish thoughts, seeking with longing and pleasure the society of those whose moral standards are beneath ours, then to love downward is not only unsafe, it is sinful and deadly; that way lie all possible spiritual evils. But that is not Jesus' way. His "loving downward" is seeking with personal interest and ardent desire to bless, with a yearning affection which will stop at no cost, those who are beneath in wisdom, growth, moral knowledge, moral strength. We can do that safely. Not to do it is about the most unsafe plan of life possible, besides being untrue to the highest obligations of our Christian calling.

The one great reason why he "loveth us and loosed us from our sins by his own blood" is that he might "make us a kingdom and priests unto God," might bring his authority, power, grace, into effective contact with the men and women whom these have not yet savingly reached, that we might in our universal Christian priesthood come with God's message to men and bear them

on the arms of intercession and prayer up to the throne of grace. That is precisely our work, with open face looking upward and receiving the sunlight of his grace, and with that love, thus received from him, "loving downward" on the souls who stand below. It does not need two positions of the soul's mirror. A glass can be so placed that it faces both the sun and the beholder's eye; in that one position it transmits the gleam it gets to the eye that looks, since "the angle of incidence and the angle of reflection are equal"; the soul that loves upward in God's presence need change no angle to love downward upon its fellow men. Indeed, can he whose face does not shed God's glory on the earth below really be facing it in the heaven above? "As the Father hath sent me into the world, even so send I you"; "I am the Light of the World," "Ye are the light of the world"; "Let your light shine"; God's method of getting the glory down.

Not to love downward is to be unresponsive to most urgent need. Sometimes we feel that it would be good for us to build, not booths only, but palaces, on the mountaintops, and like spiritual stargazers, keep our telescope turned full on celestial things, as far away as can be from the valley's dust and smoke and heat, from its Pharisees, its Sadducees, its demoniacs waiting to confuse, oppose, and abash. But "the scorn of Job" ought to be ours. "If I have eaten my morsel alone," he says; if he has not shared the food that nourished him, he feels worthy of his own contempt as well as God's condemnation. What of those who fail to receive? What of those weaker who get no atom of our strength? What of the hungry, not close to the Master, like us, of whom he said to us, as to the disciples at the lake, "Give ye them to eat?" What of the thirsts

that grow intolerable, because they get no overflow of our love, our interest, our knowledge? What of the spirits forever atrophied, in whom the warmth of our spiritual affection might start the thrill of life? Our gleam would be spiritual sunshine in which they would live and grow and blossom into beauty.

Shall we whose souls are lighted
With wisdom from on high,
Shall we to men benighted
The lamp of life deny?

Now and then one gets a message stamped, "Delayed in transmission." That is the world's trouble; it is in pain, in want, in death-throes, because of love "delayed in transmission" by those who think they love upward, but do not love downward. Some one says: "There is truth enough, lying around loose, to save the world. But the trouble is, it is lying around loose." Love, untransmitted, saves nothing.

"Delay in transmission" also means a clogged post-office or clogged carriers. It wreaks inevitable injury on our souls. The upward gaze is absolutely essential; first in order of logic, first in order of time, "Thou shalt love Jehovah thy God," and next, "thy neighbor as thyself." The full sweep of human character, the perfection of human development, cannot be obtained without both. That skyward sweep which cultivates the power to see the unseen, which brings to larger life the faculties and qualities of aspiration, dependence, submission, victory over self as a competitor with God for the throne of our life, is absolutely necessary. But what ranges of our being would be utterly undeveloped without the activity on the underside? What man (or woman) is complete, till the dependence of little children calls out in him the gentleness, tenderness, unselfishness, thoughtfulness,

protective strength, of the strong and wise toward the young and weak? We need to learn by depending on God; we need equally to learn by having others depend on us. We need our heart fibers strengthened by strong and passionate yearning after God, to receive from him; we just as much need them strengthened by a strong and passionate yearning after our fellow men, to impart to them. Unhappy is the youngest child in any family, because there is no younger one to whom it can transmit the tenderness it is receiving; unhappier the only child; unhappiest of all, the family with none; and any such, to whom God has denied the gift of children by natural descent, ought to seek a child whom the spirit can father, and begin "loving downward" at once!

"Loving downward" is often the highest touch of loving upward, transmuting feeling into fact, sentiment into love. "Inasmuch as ye did it unto one of these least, ye did it unto me." The farther the reach of love's netherward flight, the higher is its reach toward God, and the greater, in every quality conceivable, is the spiritual gain. The "wisest" Christian on earth will find most spiritual growth by the sheerest descent into the depths of spiritual ignorance, where he is obliged to shorten his mighty strides of thought and feeling to the steps of the veriest babe in Christ; and he who has advanced farthest on the road of holiness can help not only the other most, but himself most, if he will seek with helpful love the weakest and most faltering feebly following Jesus afar off.

Loving downward has dangers, of course; they spring, however, not from the loving, but from the imperfection of our growth in grace. If spiritual vitality is low, love of the Christ sort may insensibly be replaced by love of the lower sort. Occasionally some Christian worker

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who seeks "the slums" from purest motives, but with insufficient moral strength, becomes entangled there; "love of benevolence" becomes "love of complacence"; evil, "seen too oft, familiar with her face, we first endure, then pity, then embrace." This is not common in such loving. Usually the soul which has love enough to carry a blessing has life enough to carry itself safely through. Yet moral sewer-gas does tend to sap vitality. The missionary to the swamps must seek the summits regularly, assiduously. The upward love, actively maintained, with due watchfulness, will frustrate that danger.

More subtle perils, and harder to resist, rise from the very consciousness that the love is downward. A smug self-pride frequently springs up in benefactors. How much Christian helpfulness is emptied of its higher essence in the eyes of God and man by this creeping evil, it might be disheartening to estimate. Yet two effective remedies are at hand. We can be so intent on loving, and love's expression, that we forget all about the original difference in levels. Just plain loving, after all, is vastly better than downward loving. And we can dwell so much on the downward love of Christ to us, its wonder and glory, that any difference in levels becomes so infinitesimal that it no longer enters our thought. Here are just two human beings who can help each other, that is all.

A similar evil effect is sometimes exerted in the other soul, even more than in our own, from that unlovely tendency to condescension, which begins its work as soon as we begin our fancied descent, and thrusts away from us the soul we want to help, frustrates the very thing we are trying to do. The Revised version has helped us here; it changes a verse which in the King James was opposed to all true Christian feeling, equally opposed to every principle of human tact. We read no longer:

"Condescend to men of low estimate," but "Condescend to things that are lowly." The last thing any man "of low estate" wants is condescension. The minute he sees it in our eye, he bristles in hot or cold repulsion, or flees. We can get nearer any fellow creature, whether his "lowness" be moral, social, or intellectual, by ignoring the difference of level, and meeting him on the common ground of our common humanity. The wisest man can teach the most ignorant best by approaching him as a fellow learner. Indeed, where is the place and justification for that consciousness of superiority? It is neither loving nor logical. What have we that we have not received? That we should be able to transmit something to our brother is, as far as we are concerned, an "accident" of divine grace, over which "why should the spirit of mortal be proud?" Get a glimpse of ourselves alongside of Jesus, and that goes forever.

Rightly grounded, rightly guarded, how beautiful to stand between God and man, and flash the glory from our central sun upon the lives of those who just now are a little farther away, but who soon may be nearer than we are ourselves, brighter than we, as reflectors of his grace! Jesus "loves downward." We must.

XV

OUR INTERJECTED OPPORTUNITIES

We do not always call them opportunities. Sometimes we make light of them as mere passing incidents, byplays, and sometimes we chafe at them as irritating interruptions. We are overwhelmed by a rush of really important business, and this little occasion or contact comes up to the surface for a moment, but we have no time to look at it; it is too small, too superficial; we wave it aside. On our path to some extremely weighty transaction this impertinent circumstance plants itself squarely in the way, insists on being heard, delays us beyond the time of our appointment, disturbs, even derails, our carefully planned routine, and does worse than absorb our time and energy: it drains away our patience, deteriorates our temper, and dismally damages our halo.

But these are not interruptions, or mere idle additions, in God's plans. We are all of us Calvinists enough to see that his hand is directing, and that these things fall within his scheme. Like life's disappointments, they are somehow "his appointments"; and blessed ones, for they are interjected opportunities, royal chances for personal usefulness or growth.

At the least, they are God's invitations to exercise beautiful Christian qualities. If there is not one other thing in them, that is. "What will you do with me?" they say; and still more truly, "What shall I do with you?" The cuttlefish, irritated, sends up a cloud of blinding ink. But the pearl oyster begins to secrete pearl around its intruding grit. These interfering incidents are grit for

your pearl, or empty cups for your nothingness. It is not always easy to recognize in the sixth "agent" that has pulled your door-bell this morning God's gracious invitation to be patient, loving, Christlike; but the less you see this, the more it is so. Now is your time for sweetness, longsuffering, gentleness, the outshining presence of Christ in heart and soul. Now is the time, in this quick encounter, this unannounced sampling of your soul, to let him shine forth.

But these interruptions and additions are more than that; they have an amazingly real value in themselves. Perhaps in the aggregate they constitute the largest and richest elements in life's possibilities, and surpass many fold the daily routine in their wealth of opportunity. One almost wonders when he reflects what can, and may be, and has been, done in them, whether they are not, after all, the real moments for which life was made. Certainly he who misses them misses what would make his life exuberantly rich. What a master of them Jesus was! What a list could be made of his "interjected opportunities"! It may be suspected that the number of them, like the resistance of the air, increases as the square of the velocity multiplied by the surface; the larger the nature and the more swiftly it moves about its work, the more of them collide with it. Jesus always was meeting them. They came when he was busy, when he was weary, when he was trying to rest, when he was engaged with his heavenly Father; they came by day, they came by night, in the crowd, in the solitude. Tired by the wellside in Samaria he finds one, leaving the gate at Nain one meets him. They fairly come running to him, and he invariably encounters them with all the gentleness, love, and power there are in him. The "power proceeding from him" is always ready to go forth. They may intercept

him when he is on the way to one of his supremest exercises of might and good-will, as did the woman on the way to Jairus' house; but he always has time to stop and lead out into the light of faith and peace.

And so in the lives of his most helpful followers, the "interruptions" which are always opportunities are constantly recurring. The great "personal workers," the men and women who have steadily molded other lives, the wise master-builders for God, the "Master's shepherd dogs," like Uncle John Vassar, have always prized and used these opportunities. For there is something of peculiar quality about them. One thing, of course, is that they are actualities, realities, while many of the opportunities we hoped and even planned and worked to make were never more than fancies. We have been dreaming and scheming to get contact with human lives, and here God has brought lives face to face with us with no effort on our part. He has not even taken us out of our way and said, "Go and glue thyself to that chariot," but he has said to the chariot, "Go and glue thyself to him." And here we are with a princely opportunity to board that soul for Jesus. Astronomers will travel round the world for the three minutes of an eclipse. This soul-contact has traveled round the world and down the ages to meet us. We have schemed for years and not gotten so good a chance. The fact that this one with us now is not the one we hoped for, and that the way and the time are not just the way and time we planned, is of no significance. It is God's "one," and God's way, and God's time, all here together.

And there is, for the skilled worker especially, a spontaneity, a vitality about these interjected opportunities which is as fortunate as it is charming. There is nothing "cut-and-dried" about them. Your "victim"—

victim of your love and zeal for Jesus—is unwarned and unarmed. He was not looking for this thing, at least this aspect of it. He was in search of you for something else, wanted to make you his victim, indeed; or else he has just been jostled against you. If you had been planning for the interview your hands would have been hampered by your premeditation, or he would have caught your purpose in your eye. If you had both been planning he would have had his guard-arm up. The soul-winner's best work is often done in those chance encounters, on the street, in the car, in the store, rather than in the church, the Sunday school, the formal meeting.

Not only have all the wheels of God's providence been speeding you two together for that one moment, not only is that moment one of peculiar richness and power, but who can say what vistas open out from it?

> Ships that pass in the night
> And speak one another in passing
> . . . . . .
> Only a look and a voice,
> Then darkness again, and a silence.

But in that moment of contact you have introduced that soul to Christ: to opportunity, or beauty, or moral splendor, or the deep principles of righteousness. You have thrilled him with a cheering word, or friendly handclasp, or an exalted ideal, or a contagious example of love or faithfulness. You have "exchanged souls" with him, stolen away some of his unrest, given him some of your peace.

Very possibly the gain is chiefly yours. Greatly to your surprise this chance-met personality proves to be a prince of God. You did not know he was an angel of the Most High when you met; you are sure of it as

you part. You never would have known it if you had spurned him from your tent door.

When solutions of certain precious metals were slipping down the sluices too rapidly for profitable deposition, some one made the experiment of throwing in all the scrap-tin and iron he could find. The wasting metal was caught and gathered in these obstructions. The ordinary planned routine of life may gather much, but these impertinent, intrusive, jagged interruptions will keep many of life's most golden chances from passing by unused.

They are, however, really interjected opportunities only as we are prepared to make them so. They nucleate no pearl in us, if we have no pearl to secrete nor will to secrete it. The opportunist habit, the alert eye, and the ready hand, are indispensable; but much more, the neighbor heart. It was a grievous and dangerous interruption, as well as an alien incident, when that bruised, unconscious Jew stopped the path of the Samaritan. The oil and wine and beast and inn resulted only because it was a good Samaritan that stumbled on him that day.

> A thoughtful love, through constant watching wise,
>
> . . . . . .
>
> A heart at leisure from itself
> To soothe and sympathize,

is the prime prerequisite, and, with it, a prevailing thought that our business in the world is to serve the dear Christ, and to let him through us win, make, help, and save men. If our really main business is ambition, or gain, or pleasure, life's interjections will always be interruptions, irrelevances, impertinences. Many of us, oppressed and harried, are rushing by in the race, and wondering what new troublesome thing will trip us up or hold us back. If one purpose, one affection, one desire, dominates us,

life will be a perpetual, almost happily curious, questioning of God what new blessed thing he has next in store for us. Hastening through a crowded railway-station, a hand seizes your shoulder; you turn impatiently—to behold the face you would have traveled round the world to see. A much-beleagured man, pursued by importunate suitors for his time, made, and carried out with love and patience, this motto, "The man who wants to see me is the man I want to see." Surely a "counsel of perfection," considering the play of selfish, worldly, sordid, careless motives which brings us human beings together. Who can attain unto it? He, very nearly, who makes this motto his own: "The man God wants me to see is the man I want to see; and the man I do see is the man God wants me to see." "Lord, what spiritual gift for me, what gain for him, what glory for thee, wouldest thou have issue from this 'chance encounter'? May I see in him thyself, needing me; and wilt thou give thyself through me to him!"

XVI

THE DUTY OF TRANSPARENCY

The hungry heart is sometimes largely responsible for its own famine. Our fault in this may be involuntary. To very many of us, expression, especially of the deeper things, is extremely difficult. Our higher emotion, our profounder thought, seems to paralyze tongue, eye, pen.

> Far on the deep there are billows
> That never shall break on the beach,
> And I have heard songs in the silence
> That never shall float into speech,
> And I have seen thoughts in the valley,
> Ah me, how my spirit was stirred!
> They pass through the valley like Virgins,
> Too pure for the touch of a word!

But what cannot be told, need not be told. It is about the things that others *can* know and ought to know, in order to be our true companions, that we need to be concerned for utterance.

How strangely reticent, sinfully reticent, we all are, about our highest emotions and qualities, about our deepest needs! Some people, it really would seem, would be almost as willing to be caught chicken-stealing as in the act of a noble, unselfish, freehearted emotion. We are rural New Englanders of the older type, who, in the fervor and passion of their love, almost are tempted to tell the loved one what they think of her, but fortunately control themselves just in time! Self-control is a civilized virtue, but we are so deathly afraid of "slopping over" that the world grows arid for lack of our smiles

and tears. To avoid the reputation of "gushers" and "gassers" we let ourselves be taken by our fellow men, in oilmen's parlance, for "dry holes." Side by side we live, with common interests, common emotions, common loves as deep as the sea, with hearts attuned to each other, in very fact, at their profoundest depths, and we never dream of it. Some day, too late, we find it out. Sometimes never. Can God forgive that selfish folly? If heaven has any room for regrets, among the deepest surely must be that for this emotional niggardliness, this miserhood of the heart. It was our friend's lifelong deprivation, our lifelong defalcation; for if we are stewards of anything, we are stewards of our best.

Transparency is not a fault, but a virtue, the child of sincerity and good-will and trust. Opacity means mud, evil intermixture. In God's world we can throw fear to the winds. Let us not be afraid to show that we are human beings, with warmly human desires and loves and aspirations, and with frank human needs. Let us not be afraid to show that we are sons of God, with divine loves and feelings and aspirations. The shame would be not to have them.

We need a fresh sense of the real values of things. Love is nothing to grow sheepish over. High hope is not to be blushed for. The longing after God is far from being a thing to be ashamed of. "No, when I blush, be this my shame," that these things can rouse no self-forgetful enthusiasm in my soul. For "nothing to admire" is the motto, not of maturity, but of soul-atrophy and senile decay.

And this concealment is dissimulation without excuse. There is a hypocrisy that hides the good, and it is hard to see wherein it is less sinful than that which dissembles the evil. Hide your meanness, if you will. That is the

place for it. Smother it, bury it. Give it neither light nor air. It is not yourself. It is sin. It is "what you would not," a traitor to the best in you. It has no right to expression. But show your fellow man that good thing. Let him see your love, your longing for the highest, your noble resolution. "Too sacred for expression?" Never believe it. There is nothing too sacred for expression. Time, place, person, method, must indeed be considered. But what is "too sacred for expression" lacks somewhere of being fully fit for possession. The things that are really sacredest sanctify wherever they touch, and, like Jesus, get no contamination from the leper or the bier. Indeed, like him, they have an inherent power to bring cleansing to the leper, and life to the dead. We do not trust their power enough. Let men know what you are at your best, and the world will be made over for them and you.

> Be noble! and the nobleness that lies
> In other men, sleeping, but never dead,
> Will rise in majesty to meet thine own;
> Then wilt thou see it gleam in many eyes,
> Then will pure light around thy path be shed,
> And thou wilt nevermore be sad and lone.

Sometimes there is even a more selfish thing than fear that we need to cast away, though we are prone to think it is a nobler thing. And that is our pride, our mistaken dignity. These friends of ours, we think or dumbly feel, ought to see our nobility by the clear vision of friendship, the delicate perception of real spiritual kindred. We ought not to be obliged to tell it! And that pain and distress of ours—must I "go to my brother's house in the day of my calamity"? Let him come to me, as love surely will. He ought to see my trouble, understand my pain, by some fine sense know even at the ends of the earth

that my heart is sore for need of him. Certainly he ought not to wait for my petition. And so, with his heart all athrob with potential sympathy that a word would have crystallized, vitalized, into fullest life, and with an added ache in my own heart because my friend has thus failed me, I "die and make no sign." That cross I made myself because I would not crucify my pride, because I set up an unreal and faulty ideal of what love is, because I expected of ignorant man the omniscience of almighty God. The sisters at Bethany were wiser: "Lord, behold, he whom thou lovest is sick."

Confidence has not reached its height until it is willing and able to tell its need. There *is* need, of course, so deep, so intimate, so private, that there is no human being in whose penetration, wisdom, goodness, charity, we can feel confidence enough to entrust that secret. But for that we have the Infinite Friend. Regarding the things that do come within the range of the human help, and these, too, may be very intimate, true confidence recognizes that the human eye is but an imperfect instrument of vision, seeing but a little way, and seldom very far beneath the surface, looking through mists of preoccupation, absorption, and our own insistent personal pain. I love you. I want to help you. But I am a poor, blunt, blind, blundering *man*. If *you* love *me,* give me a chance. Be fair with me. Signal me that you need me. Do not wait for me to find it out. Let love's real trust overmaster pride.

When men will not speak out, no wonder hearts go hungry.

XVII

THE SATISFACTION OF THE SUPPRESSED JUDGMENT

The satisfaction of expressing our judgments is what we are most apt to feel we should like. A man stands before us whom in the course of events we have come to appraise—and the appraisal is not entirely commendatory. We have penetrated his interiors and found undesirable things there. We have measured his stature and discovered him here and there short measure; weighed him in a balance and found him wanting. We have him "sized up."

Now we should like the luxury of telling about it. We should like to exhibit the keenness of our penetration, the balance and poise of our moral judgment, upon this notable case of deficiency. We should like to show the world what sort of man this is who so bravely parades before them. Or we should be pleased to expose him and exploit our powers, before a select few. Often we covet the luxury of "telling *him* just what we think of him." Or if consideration, or cowardice, or thought of the good of the cause deters us, we say nothing, but we still enjoy the satisfaction of thinking, "Well, I have you weighed and measured and placed."

What a satisfaction all that is! But, thank God, there is a higher delight than the delight of expression; it is the delight of suppression. It is the power of standing over against that judgment of ours and saying to it: "I see you; you are clear enough. Maybe you have some substance. Maybe you have a real foundation. Never

mind. Down you go! Get down into that subregion of my mind where you will never appear again. Or at any rate get back into such a place in my mechanism that you will be only a cog, a subordinate spring, so checked and belted that you cannot stir an evil emotion, but only form a part of the great movement of love and thoughtfulness and good will."

Now what a satisfaction all that would be if we were able to rise to it! And ought we not always to rise to it?

When in such fashion *we suppress a judgment,* we are doing it *in the interest of our love for the morally beautiful and splendid.* Of course, the way most natural and pleasant to the critical and spiteful "old Adam" in us is to express our love for the morally beautiful by expressing our detestation for the morally base. And indeed, real love for the beautiful is not possible without accompanying repugnance for its opposite. But it is never good to live much in negatives. To Christian love, conscientious and accurate faultfinding is a rare necessity, impelled to only by a faithful conscience, and abandoned for the other side of service as soon as possible, and with what a feeling of glad relief! The change is a breath of fresh air. "Thanks be to God, I do not have to discover faults now. I do not have to strike balances. I can get away out of the dark into the daylight, into the breezy uplands among the flowers and fragrance of the love and earnestness and grace which I can see if I will."

Another legitimate gratification in these suppressed judgments is that we are *realizing the meaning of self-mastery,* self-control. We are enabled to hold off an unpleasant thought, to put it out of mind entirely, or to maintain it only in a subordinate position. When we can hold our judgments thus in their proper places we are *men* at last, reasonable souls, rulers of ourselves. Most

people are mere reflectors; their feeling toward any person at the moment is determined chiefly by the particular quality that person is just then exerting toward them. Is it a zephyr? They dimple with delight. A north wind? They shiver. A sirocco? They shrivel. But the *man*—that is to say, the Christian—has his feelings and his judgments under the rein of his will. Is his food scorched? He shuts out of consideration the taste of the scorch and permits to come to his mental palate only the finer, delightsome flavors of the dish. A high attainment? Very. And there is satisfaction in it, if it represent, not your power, but Christ's. You have put away childish things; you have become a man.

That we have also entered the realm of the real beauty and pleasure that can be found if we search long enough in any human character whatever, is a surpassingly great gain. To be mastered by the scorched taste, so that you cannot think of anything else, is unworthy of a man or a Christian. To "inhibit" unpleasant emotions, shut them out, is to enjoy what God meant us to enjoy, the best qualities of our fellow men. But to keep in some ready pocket a handful of the old "scorch," and, whenever the flavor of our brother's life becomes unusually rich and pleasant, to drop that into the dish, is as foolish as it is common. "Forget it" is one of the phrases which slang temporarily borrowed from good English; with regard to many things it is the highest philosophy of life, and the open door into unknown and incalculable pleasures.

There is an added satisfaction in the suppressed judgment which some of us may not readily think of. It is *the luxury of abandoning a task* which is too much for us, which is rarely or never ours, and which usually we are forbidden to perform. A certain amount of appraisal of our fellow men may be necessary in order to adjust our

action to the real situation; we may be in official or other positions where we must estimate the fitness of a given human instrument to a given task. But aside from such things it ought to be a great relief to know that no one has commissioned us as a perpetual committee of investigation for the discovery and weighing and ticketing of our fellow men. That is a self-imposed task; an unnecessary task; an unauthorized task; a costly task. "Judge not that ye be not judged." It is an inexpressible comfort to be able to leave judgment to God; and we are both invited and commanded to do it.

What we are bidden to do is to appreciate and enjoy the best in our fellow men. That ought to keep us busy at a delightsome labor. What we do not understand is that when we seek the materials for adverse judgments (strange that "judgment" and "condemnation" should be so often synonymous) we are cultivating our souls downward, and in just the opposite direction from what God intended. It is said that if hunting-dogs bred to scent and follow "noble" game are once trained to smell out any lower quarry they never cease their downward trend, but soon come to stop and follow any scent, however mean or insignificant. God meant us in our fellow men to trail truth, love, hope, virtue, unselfishness. God help us if we cannot nobly pass by the little enticing odors of ignoble things that invite condemnatory investigation, and press on to whatsoever things are true, whatsoever things are honorable, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report.

But *the chief glory* of the suppressed judgment is that it is *the triumph of love over hate, of Christ over self.* These censorious judgments, or any gratuitous judgments at all, are really the product of self, of pride, of spite, of an assertion somehow of our own worthless authority

or ability. It is only very slightly a keen moral sense that makes us "judge"; it is nine-tenths wounded ambition, or envy, or jealousy, or malice. Love may sometimes have to probe in order to know where or what the wound or the ulcer is, but love never "judges" the way our human nature does. "Judge" usually implies "grudge." Love never does that. If it has to form an unfavorable estimate, it betters or balances or buries it as soon as it can. If we cannot keep that past condemnation from perpetually sticking up its head in the present field of vision, yes, even when some revelation of the man himself brings it up, if we cannot put hands on it and resolutely thrust it back, our love surely lacks its full growth, for love "taketh not account of evil—hopeth all things, believeth all things." Look at that man! Faults I have seen in him, faults undeniable, even faults mountainous! By the grace of God and the indwelling Christ I will flood those faults, submerge them fathoms deep, in the tide of my yearning, blessing, hopeful, undying love, received of Jesus Christ. That is what God is doing to me; and I am "likest God" when I in Christ do it to my fellow man.

XVIII

THE HABIT OF THE KINDLY JUDGMENT

Few things help more to make life pleasant and effective than the habit of the kindly judgment, and few arts are more neglected. People are constantly saying and doing things which may be understood favorably or unfavorably. Human nature is a sadly mixed thing, and the moral failure we infer, the selfish or malicious motive we suspect, may be there; it has been in similar cases; it may be now. But it is also possible to adopt the kindly view. This failure of our friend to do the thing we had a right to expect is probably due to circumstances beyond his control. He has lacked, not good-will, but opportunity. His statement hardly seems to "hold water," but one more fact, unknown now, may show its consistency and candor in a light as clear as day. That most unaccountable thing may be readily and pleasantly accounted for when we know all. And, not knowing all now, we are going to believe it to be "all right," anyway.

The habit of the kindly judgment is the habit of choosing the pleasanter, the more creditable interpretation whenever choice is possible. It is not refusal to interpret. For while we are forbidden to sit as judges upon the actions and motives of our fellow men, we are often obliged to appraise things and men, lest we cast our pearls before swine and build our temples out of poor stone and bad mortar. Kindly judgment is not what is called charitable judgment. Charitable judgment is when we know the things to be evil and yet see the extenuating circumstance, or lean to mercy's side by sheer force of forgiving or

forbearing or healing love. That is "grace," unmerited favor. But kindly judgment is not that; it is hardly even "graciousness"; it is simple fairness; it is the law which holds every man innocent till he is proved guilty. Have we a right to any other practise? Is not the evil interpretation unfairness, cruelty, malevolence, spiritual robbery? He who casts over my action the evil sheen of suspected evil before he positively knows it to be evil, is a thief, a robber, a poisoner, and a murderer. The kindly judgment is the only judgment a man has a right to make. Not till he is forced to do so should any man abandon it.

It certainly is incomparably the pleasanter for the man who exercises it. One of the bitterest "penalties of scorn" is the kind of atmosphere scorn surrounds us with. One lives then in a world of cowards, cheats, weaklings, perverts. He has to work like Nehemiah's followers, trowel in one hand, sword in the other; and he must be his own watchman, night and day; he cannot trust anybody's trumpet signal. He lives the life of an Oriental despot; every dish may be poisoned, every guard a traitor. The cynic's world is poor, cheap, mean, yellow. People naturally avoid certain health resorts because of the depressing effect of daily contact with the distressing abnormalities, the pitifulnesses, which there abound. No one for pleasure would live in a cancer hospital. But the cynic surrounds himself with worse cankers. The habit of the kindly judgment lifts above all this. It recognizes that human nature is weak enough, but it fixes its eyes on the evidences of health, not disease, of convalescence, not decline. It is surrounded by men and women—not angels, but honest men and women, kindly impulses, good principles, right action. The fresh air of the moral heights is blowing on it continually. The other man lives in a moral Black Hole of Calcutta.

That the world would move with almost infinitely more smoothness and comfort if this method prevailed only a cynic can doubt. A vast number of life's most painful frictions and bitterest dissensions would cease at once. They are generated by life's ill-founded, suspicious dreads. Evil motives and intentions do, of course, exist, and in mournfully large percentage. This is earth, not heaven. But it is the evil we *think* the other man has done, or purposes to do, rather than anything he ever does, that fills this world with fences, laws, courts, and armies, makes it hard to live together, uses up in painful, costly harmful friction the energy that might be working out the best good and God's glory. Let each man think the highest of his neighbor's act, and all armies are disbanded.

The reflex influence of the kindly judgment is incalculable for good. How rich grows that heart which always reads good in the human lives about it, which not only has the delight of their moral sunshine and fresh air, but in which that oxygen burns away the ill-feeling he may have been in danger of having, and strengthens every power of perception of good, every faculty of loving, every capacity of noble thought and feeling! Who so pitiable as the pessimist? who so to be envied as the man who always thinks the highest of his fellow men? The first has become a poison gland, secreting a venom ever deadlier to others, but deadliest to himself; the second is a sun of love and hope, with healing in his wings.

But there is a question which experience of life makes very practical. What of the deceptions, disappointments, losses, sure to come? Is not the hopeful one doomed again and again to bitter grief? Will he not often leap upon a broken reed, which will pierce his hand? No doubt. Probably none escape that experience. But while it is wisdom's part to be ready for the storm when it comes,

and to know how to find strength in the Friend who cannot fail when some friends do fail, is it wise to take every cloud for a tornado, and let the fear of possible ill rob every day of its sunshine? And suppose we are to be deceived, and to suffer cruelly; what soul would not rather exercise Christ's unconquerable hopefulness and love than Timon's bitter hate or Mephistopheles' mocking cynicism? Who would not rather trust a thousand times, and be deceived a thousand times, than have a jaundiced eye and venom heart that trusts nobody and misreads everybody, displaying every day its lack of faith in God and good? No sudden shock to faith, such as sometimes comes upon the man who trusts, can be half as fatal, as deadly, as that slow corrosive of distrust.

When a generous soul has been temporarily betrayed into hasty condemnation, how profoundly ashamed of himself he is when time, as it so often does, shows that he has taken his stand with the great Adversary and Slanderer. When he is shown to have taken evil for good, been too credulously believing, trusted in a broken reed, he may know that his heart spoke right if his eye did see wrong. But when he followed the cynic and took good for evil, both his eye and heart were wrong; he has been tried in love's balances, right's balances, and has been found wanting. The unkindly judgment is almost always wrong. And God works with the man of trust. That the structure of society can stand over night is proof positive that the forces of right, truth, honesty, love, reenforced by God, are mightier than their adversaries.

The habit of kindly judgment is, under God, the mightiest force for its own justification. There are some lives too weak or too wicked to yield completely to its influence, but there are few lives which are wholly proof against its power. Its presence, or that of its opposite,

most often turns the scale. The sting of injustice occasionally spurs on the strongest souls to try to do their best, but in many a pitched battle of the "average man" the frown of condemnation is the one thing that sent him to defeat. The life which expects the worst of others is poison to all good endeavor: feeble spirits are smothered; once in a while some one fights through; more often the strong soul sours, and reacts in spite or hate or determined selfishness. The life which expects the best of those it touches stimulates them to the best, and gets it, in surprising quantity.

XIX

THE SERVICE OF THE SIMPLE

Not least among the solaces for the simple is the valuable service they are privileged to render. This indeed seems to them the very thing most in question. They look if possible even more desparingly at what they are able to do than at what they are. The finished work of their subtler friends is at once their admiration and despair. That delicate discrimination, that masterly analysis, that penetration into the roots of things, that judicial balance, that fine character-painting, that easy threading through labyrinths of thought and motive, are all beyond them, and they lose hope of doing anything that can appeal to or profit minds that are fed on such skilfully compounded pabulum as this. Who are we, we simpler folk ask, that we should offer our poor little narrow, shallow, commonplace wares in a market thus nobly stocked?

There is no doubt that these other brothers of the mind do render a service we cannot perform, a needed service, and a service for classes we cannot reach. It takes more than one steward of God to give each his measure of meat in due season. And that there is increasing complexity in the world's ways of looking at things is very clear. There will always be fascination and necessity for thoughtful minds in the many questions of faith and duty which press on man.

But there is large room for others. For one thing, we shall find a great class of men who neither want nor need the profound and subtle. These are not their problems or difficulties or trials. Possibly they are too en-

grossed with the hard daily demands to have much time or energy for these other things. It may be mental poverty or mental sluggishness, but they do not find the problems; and the problems do not find them. The subtleties pass over their heads, pass them by, pass through their minds unassimilated. What we simpler folk have to offer is food and drink to them. We are on their level, just wise enough for "common folks."

The striking thing is that these people on the lower planes constitute the great bulk of the human race. Many a preacher, teacher, speaker, forgets this, and aims for the hundredth man. That was a wise teacher of theology who told his students to put their "doctrinal sermons" into language which could be understood by an intelligent child of fifteen. If he could have had before him the revelation of war-time and other "intelligence tests," he would have lowered his age-gauge to twelve. Any "subtle" preacher would be amazed at the utter vagueness of the impression made by his carefully wrought, intensely thoughtful preaching. But they of the simple thought, touch, and speech are providentially compelled to talk to the simple. They are sentenced to be the companions of the majority, the solacers of the crowd. They are denied the possession of souls that are like a star and dwell apart; they are condemned to "live in a house by the side of the road." And there are worse things than that!

But the simple are not wholly condemned to that alone. They often have a real mission to the great and noble of mind and spirit. They cannot serve them all the time, but they can serve them some of the time. The keenest, most athletic, the profoundest, most balanced, intellect now and again grows weary of its own habitual subtleties. It is good that the whole highly intellectual orchestra or

chorus should cease for a time, while one clear note is carried by a single, simple instrument. That is the opportunity of us simple folk. We can send into the highly complex atmosphere of the laboratory and the hothouse a breath of the uncompounded air of the great out-of-doors. Some great, strong, elemental nature or truth, some direct, positive, forthright, uncomplicated teaching, how it thrills and braces! Whatever one's usual preferences, the eye falls on this simplicity with the delight with which one sees the broad sweep of parklike lawn unbroken by a single shrub. It is satisfying, soothing, strengthening. Those who are able to give no other pleasure or help may hereby give a pleasure no others can.

And our comfort may go much farther. The man with the message of elemental truth, clear, clean-cut, single, is the man who spiritually, if he can get their attention (and if he is determined, he can), has the message which even the most subtle need and want. The really high-born, intellectually, will give attentive ear to any authentic voice. At the center of their being what they need is not analysis, speculation, but the great basal facts and forces of the spiritual life.

Men have always made the mistake of supposing that Christianity's appeal is in its essence intellectual. It is never really so. It is spiritual. Your crowding intellectual questionings, balancings, speculations, leave the spirit of man untouched, his true relationship with the heart of things unattained. It is true that these two parts of our being must not long remain dissevered; intellectual convictions and spiritual experiences must neither be hostile nor divorced. The mind must be satisfied as well as the spirit. Yet the intellectual is really a surface problem, and its relief a surface alleviation. It eases the way, it removes friction; but it is neither the track nor the power.

Surely that was one of our Lord's profoundest words on spiritual progress: "Will, do, know."

So while the dialectician or philosopher is fumbling at the Gordian knots of his difficulty or problem, and fumbling in vain, along comes some strong, simple soul of spiritual insight, power, conviction, with a formula as clean cut and little complex, in one sense as childishly simple, as A, B, C, and cuts the knot in a moment. The problem has not been solved, but it has been dissolved, in the new light of religious experience. Moody, and others like him, have done that for thousands of souls far more cultured and complex than themselves. For each one of these profounder men is supremely and at his base a man, and his being is organized around a few simple principles—the trunk and main branches—however intricate may be the subdivision of his twigs and leaves. Let him who will trim at the branches. Let us lay our axes to the root. One stroke here is worth more than many out among the twigs.

The service of the simple is the service which is most needed, and at the point of greatest danger. The facts and forces it deals with, the truths it proclaims, are just the truths most likely to be forgotten; and, these forgotten, they and we are in gravest peril. Weakening influences, false philosophy, are steadily at work. Fascinated by the chase of the novel and subtle, we are forgetful of the simple and fundamental. We are so far out on the twigs that we have only thin air under us. These simple truths are truisms. Nobody wants to utter commonplaces. But commonplaces are common because they are so true. Because they are so true, they are uttered so often. Uttered so often they lose their power. Then, unuttered, or despised, they are forgotten. They need perpetually to be proclaimed again. Somebody must be forever rediscovering the first truths of the moral and spiritual life, and be

uttering and reuttering them with all the enthusiasm of a Columbus.

The man who can do this with force and power is not, as a rule, he who has spent his time and energy in profound and even necessary delving at the extremities of either roots or branches. It must be one who gets them, or whom they get, as complete and simple wholes, so many condensed secrets of the Christian life. These single bugle notes which sound out clear and alone at dusk and in the early morning are what the world is ever needing. They who are called to other sorts of service by nature, training, and very likely the real call of God, do well to exercise their gifts; they are intellectual pioneers, spiritual auxiliaries. But they who move on as God's main army are those who dare touch again and again these basal notes, recalling the stragglers, spurring up the main body by reiterated signals of truth, honor, faith, obedience—simple ideas based indeed on profoundest philosophy, but needing no philosophy to understand, and needed by all philosophers.

Of course the simplicity must be presented with the freshness of vital, glowing, daily experience. Nothing is more dead than dead simplicity. Of course the presenter must seek the reasonable and the up-to-date application. First truths a thousand years away have no electric power. Of course there must be in it the white-hot enthusiasm of love, conviction, pulsing will. Nothing is nearer absolute zero than an unwarmed first truth. Of course the human spirit and thought must be infused, transfused, fused by the fire of the divine. Who dares present truth with less fire than this? That understood, he who can be simple, who dares be simple, even he who cannot be anything else but simple, may serve most men, most of the time, most nobly.

XX

SERVICEABLE SUBSTITUTES FOR TACT

There is no perfect substitute for perfection, except another perfection exactly like it. Nothing on earth can take the place of real tact, that noble combination of goodwill in the heart, perception and invention in the head, and skill and gentleness in the hand, which opens hearts that otherwise would remain triple-barred against all comers, smooths tangled situations which would else be hopeless, allays the little or great hurts inflicted by hands less heedful, and gently leads to finer issues or shapes to nobler statures the souls it touches. When tact approaches perfection, as it sometimes almost seems to do, it becomes to our admiring eyes something almost like the divine, resembling the masterful, gentle touch of Jesus.

But the admiration of most of us is the admiration of despair. We realize our utter deficiency, so shallow of insight are we, so barren of invention, so heavy and clumsy of touch. The last thing we would claim, and almost the last thing we would hope for, is tact. Yet we may get through the world with a good deal of comparative ease to ourselves, and of comfortable helpfulness to others, if we will diligently and lovingly use some inferior makeshifts we have at hand.

Timidity and caution are certainly not tact. They are negative, passive, fitted to restrain rather than to give force and direction to great positive actions. And yet to keep a sharp lookout for rocks is sometimes almost as good as to know the channel. It may not lead us to triumphant short-cuts, but it saves from many a wreck. In

regions where no maps can possibly chart the drifting icebergs, "go slow" may not be brilliant seamanship, but it leads to port. It seems rather an ignoble, ignorant motto on the sea of life, and indolent also. It means that many good things will be left undone. But still more of the evil, stinging, hurtful things will be left undone too. That wise, cheerful, inspiring thing which some quicker man would say, which we ought to say, will not be said, greatly to our humiliation and regret; but neither will the rankling shaft be sped. "Whatsoever is not of faith is sin"; "when in doubt what to say, say nothing."

But sometimes something must be said, something done. "It is your move"; the eyes of all are fastened upon us. Silence may be disloyalty, inaction may be unfaithfulness or injury. Then is the time to reenforce the dictates of timidity by the suggestions of kindness. One thing we have determined, that unless absolute fidelity should demand it, we will under no circumstances say or do the thing that might irritate or wound. Duty does sometimes call for it. The thrust, the cut, may be just as much "tact" as the balm; it may be the only part love will let tact play. But if this is not clearly evident, the other is our staple strategy.

With practise we can go much farther, and make it our rule always to say the thing that is positively helpful, soothing, inspiring, bringing the sunshine of good-will, approbation, faith, to bear on the lives around us. This demands much more of us. It is easier to avoid the destructive than to initiate the constructive. But it is not very hard to conceive that whatever enhances our fellow's faith in God, love for man, and hope for the future, is right diet for the soul. Paul on shipboard, serenely trusting, radiating faith and hope through word and act, is the normal Christian. With such thought in mind we are

pretty sure to say the right thing. Our words may be halting, our phrases awkward, our thought even shallow, but we are uttering something that is *not* awkward, an inward spirit of hope and right and love.

And then, small as we think our imagination and insight to be, they will often go a great deal farther than we think. The trouble is that we have never consciously and deliberately set them to work. If the chess-player moved his men as little thoughtfully as we make our moves in the game of life, he would be checkmated almost at the first play. We can all of us read much more of our fellow's feeling than we ever have read yet. The biggest share of tact is the open eye, playing alertly on our brother's face and on the shifting situation. No one can read a page at which he does not look. And knowing ourselves and how we would probably act in certain conjunctures, it is not so very hard to guess what the other's next stage or move will be. We shall often be disappointed and bitterly surprised, but not half so often as when we plunge ahead with shut eyes.

It is marvelous, too, how much keenness to see and power to anticipate is given to the dullest souls by the simple habit of loving. The kinds of blind love are many enough: the love that is passion, and the love that is mere fondness, and the love that is selfish pride of possession, and the love that is foolish complacency. But the love that is intelligent good-will and passionate desire to bestow, is keen to *see* needs, to understand, to invent, to anticipate. It gives accuracy to eyes that were otherwise unseeing. It increases delicacy of touch, imparts wisdom of movement, generates the hopeful, life-giving atmosphere, and anticipates sometimes almost with the precision of the divine foreknowledge. To us who bewail our absence of tact, life says, "Suppose you try loving a while,

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and see how that will work!" Our love may have to go for a time on hands and knees where tact walks with free stride, it may have to grope where tact sees, it assuredly will make many mistakes, it certainly must toil and sweat and suffer; but in the end it will make to itself eyes, nerves, fingertips, brain, which can feel and plan and execute in marvelous fashion. Only it must be *love,* a self-denying, self-spending outpour of heart and mind and will, love that is seeking not her own but the things of others, that suffereth long and is kind, that believeth all things, hopeth all things, that never faileth.

But still is there deficiency? Then thank God, we have other eyes at our command than those that are in our own heads, other wisdom than ours, another love than that which beats in our own breasts. "When in doubt what to say, ask God!" That God stands ready with his own infinite stores of wisdom to supplement the insufficient wisdom of his children, or sometimes even to flood their insufficiency away and substitute his own sufficiency, his Word assures us; and the experience of every child of his who has tested it corroborates. "In that hour it shall be given you what to say." Our confidence in God will not take away our sense of the immense importance of what we are doing, our feeling of our own ignorance and feebleness, our own deepening sense of insufficiency, but we are doing his work, under his commission, for his glory, and we have every right to expect that he will put forth his power in the hour of our need and his.

Serviceable substitutes? Let a man put all these things together at work, and, though he himself would never claim it or suspect it, and still would work in conscious weakness and even in frequent sense of failure, yet among the God-garlanded sons of tact his name will hold high place.

XXI

THE BARBLESS HOOK

A contemporary periodical pleads with its fishermen readers to use a barbless hook. It is urged that this is more humane, that it is in the spirit of fair play, since it gives the fish more of a chance for itself; and that it enables the fisherman to employ and develop a larger amount of sportsmanlike skill. So far as the fish is concerned, this reminds one of the man who, when told that a certain newly invented stove would save half his fuel, remarked, "Then I'll get two stoves and save it all." Fishing without any hook at all would seem to be still fairer to the fish. But the rightfulness of fishing, within limits, and in the right way, is not to be denied. God gave meat to men for food: "every moving thing that liveth shall be meat for you" (Gen. 9 : 3). Fishing may be, and if followed ought to be, the "gentle art" of one who professes a religion of which the first leaders were fishermen, and whose Founder directed them more than once to a mighty catch, and added the command, "Follow me, and I will make you to become fishers of men."

And in this nobler fishing to which he who said to Peter, "Fear not; from henceforth thou shalt take men alive," summons us, there is no place for the barbless hook. Yet, it must be confessed, fishing with that sort of hook is too sadly common. The "fairest play," the greatest mercy to that fish, is to hook him firmly for Jesus Christ and get him to land in the shortest practicable order and with the least maneuvering and suspense. Really to catch a man for Jesus is to bring him to that point where he has

willingly and lovingly submitted himself to Christ. If you have "won" him, if you have obtained the consent of mind, heart, and will to the gentle mastery of our blessed Lord, then your "hook" is that something, that convincing, persuading, constraining power that holds him fast to duty, to sense of right, to sense of conscience, to sense of necessity, and so enables you to draw him "out of life's troubled sea, out of the world's unrest," out of his uncharted, selfish, and sinful "freedom" to the safe bosom of Jesus' love. Your "bait" is whatever so appeals to mind or heart or will that you may get this "hook and line" of love and right firmly fixed within his soul. It gets him to bite at the truth.

And the "barb"? In the literal fishing, it is that which prevents the fish that has "struck" the hook from drawing back. The sharpest hook without a barb, handled even by the most skilful fisher would be a poor thing, would make fishing an irritating lottery, in which blanks would far outnumber prizes. But in the fishing for men, a lost "fish" is a lost soul; he was lost before; now he is twice lost: for this partial experience of the grip of truth upon him, all the more if it was painful, makes him shyer than ever, wary in his avoidance of "tight corners," indifferent to gospel bait. The barb in the gospel fishing is not the thing whose purpose is to irritate, though it may do that; it is whatever holds fast the soul to the conviction of truth until conviction has blossomed into acceptance, Jesus has been made Saviour, and the truth has been forever clinched, riveted, into life.

Hence one prime weakness of too much of our Christian work is the barbless hook: of the work of the preacher, who tries to lead men to the acceptance of Christ; of the teacher, seeking to fasten truth in his pupils' minds; of every one who endeavors to woo men from any sort of

darkness into any sort of light, from any sort of unregulated conduct into order and efficiency.

We fish with a barbless hook when in our work for men, specifically in winning them for Christ, we do not bring to bear on them *the intenser, imperative demands of God's justice and right,* "the law," if you please, in the sense of the rigid, irrevocable, inexorable, righteous demand of God for purity and holiness, a demand which drives the sinner helpless to Jesus Christ as his only possible way of satisfaction. To preach "law" without "gospel" is to fish with a baitless hook. To preach gospel without law is to fish with a barbless hook. The bait is there, bait of God's love and kindness and pity and mercy and grace; all true, all blessed, all glorious, all worthy of our most ecstatic praise; but we are dealing with men on whom and in whom sin and wilfulness have got a death-grip; whose instincts are for the roaming deeps of sin; who are as afraid of the gospel light (though how mistakenly) as the trout is of that thin element into which you are trying to beguile him. Drawn near by the love of God alone, this unrenewed soul soon yields to other lures, or with an instinctive, conclusive leap of the old wild nature throws itself clear of the gospel hook. One preacher of the barbless type confessed that there was not in his new gospel that which would "shake men out of their boots." There is not in it the barb of stern demand that holds to the truth; it is but a bent pin for the strong-willed, the sin-enslaved, the weak. One may or may not like the sting and stick of Billy Sunday's preaching, but it, like that of every great evangelist who reaches and holds men, is *barbed.*

Along with the barb of the demands of God's law, to be satisfied only by the empowering Life of the risen Christ, must go also *the barb of the inescapable judgment of God,*

which must be met by the sinner himself if he has not accepted the substituted death of Christ as his only escape from the second death or hell. Those who are not preaching the gospel of awful judgment as well as the gospel of free grace are not giving men the message that Christ has laid on us to deliver, and their hooks are shorn of the barb that he himself and his soul-winning evangelists have used with power.

A barbless hook, again, is that preaching which does not present *a triumphant gospel,* the gospel of a victorious life, the gospel of a religious experience of God's grace, clear, sharp-cut, blessed, effective. In our revolt from what may have been barren and mechanical and non-vital in older doctrines of atonement and the new life, in our revolt from the merely emotional or the too emotional, if that can be, in the religious life, in our reaction against what were clearly the excessive claims of some so-called perfectionists, some of us may have come to preach a religion which put the blessed experience of redeeming and vivifying grace altogether too far off in the future, or made the religious life a fainting, stumbling, falling, halting "progress" practically on our own poor feet alone toward a distant goal, instead of the happy walk with God that it ought to be.

Then there is *the barbless hook of a religious activity which does not aim at and produce immediate, definite, positive results.* We have a way of saying piously (we think it is piously): "Oh, the gospel is a seed, it has divine efficacy. It will do its work. We are bidden to sow beside all waters. Who knoweth which will bring forth, this or that?" True, seed-sowing has a large place in Christian work; and to the Christian worker, though never to God, a good deal of it looks like uncertainty. True, a good deal of our fishing work is the scattering of "ground

bait," as when into one place in river, lake, or bay is cast day after day such food as the fish like, that they may get the habit of assembling there. But successful fishing means that some time somebody, with enclosing net or beguiling hook and bait, some one with definite plan and purpose, goes out to *catch fish then and there.*

That definite fishing is the crucial hour; it calls for the utmost exercise of alertness and skill and will; it is the time when many a mistake is made, and when some fish are forever lost; it is awful in its intensity of meaning; but it is absolutely essential. By various legitimate plans and expedients, by striking deep with " law " and " gospel " truths, by the resolute putting forth of power in gentle but persistent constraint (careful not to strain too hard nor prick too deep), we must hold this struggling soul to the consideration and grapple of the truth till he makes decision for Jesus Christ. He will not always like the barb, he will usually struggle to get away, he will " kick against the goads "; but we must hold him there, in spite of his struggle, in spite of our own disinclination and indolence of will.

Though the grapple may be as painful to us as to him, we must not in our work be like boys who knock at doors and wait not to negotiate their entrance. It is said of one minister, whose service was not productive of conversions, that he borrowed and preached the sermon of a brother noted for his success in this. At the conclusion of his sermon he found many of his congregation in tears of real penitence, which so disturbed him that he exclaimed, " I beg your forgiveness; I did not mean to hurt your feelings," and dismissed the meeting!

Yet our hook may have all these barbs, the thrust of the law and of judgment, the clinch of a definite, glorious promise, the holding power of a definite grapplement of

the soul for decisive action, and yet miss the one effective barb, *the power of the Holy Spirit,* prayed for, expected, appropriated, given. "That which is born of the flesh is flesh"; it is in no human power to fix inextricably in the deep fibers of the human heart the truth of God so that it becomes the ruling force there forever. He who, however wise or witty or benevolently wily or splendidly full of will, fishes for men where Jesus is not giving orders and the Spirit is not at work, will toil all the night and take nothing. All his fish will get away. His hook is smooth.

XXII

THE SUFFRAGES OF THE SMALL

It sometimes hurts to think that a great man with a great idea is obliged to get the consent of small men with small ideas before he can bring his mighty plan into effective execution. The little man may be on a throne, and Christopher Columbus must beg and plead for the privilege of giving a new continent to the world. The little men may compose a constituency, and John Calvin, John Knox, and Adoniram Judson must depend for their success on what support they can gain from the "commonalty." Paul comes with the very gospel of God into a new town, and his truth makes progress as it is accepted or rejected by people who can as yet grip only the fringes of it; and he must meet the steady, steely, determined opposition of men who ought to receive him with open arms as the one who can lead them into the righteousness they need and have never been able to find.

Is it not a degrading necessity, thus to have to seek the consent of the small? Many a massive soul must often feel like washing his hands of it all, shaking the dust of the city from his shoes, and exclaiming, "Since ye judge yourselves unworthy of eternal life, I turn" to those who will listen, or back to the region of high ideals and great thoughts into which I cannot persuade you to enter. Sometimes, indeed, that very thing must be said. "O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, how often would I! And ye would not!" "Thou knewest not the time of thy visitation."

But it ought to be long before the messenger of God and truth reaches that stage. For the experience of wait-

ing for consent is one that comes to all workers for God. One might as well complain against gravitation, and the law of seed-time and harvest. There never has been a man who lifted humanity to higher things who has not moved along this path. Not the reformer only, the thinker, the innovator, the teacher, but every man who sways his fellow men, does it by the consent of the small. The greatest despot, the monarch absolutely "unlimited," as we say, rules really by the consent of the governed; a consent forced, compelled, it may be, by a vast assembling of influences, seen and unseen; but the moment the subjects cease to cast for their king the ballots of their submission, you have a dead despotism or a dead despot. Not even the most helpful and beneficent personality in the world has been able to progress without it. Jesus Christ himself is king, and will be king, and can be king in the true sense, only in the hearts which at their depths are voting for him, the children that shout hosannas, the common people that hear him gladly.

The principle is not only to be recognized as inevitable, but it is to be accepted joyfully as wise and beneficent in its great main trend, even if some of its side-eddies and surface-swirls greatly shock us.

Of course it is inevitable, a plain axiom of life. Since the only real movement forward is the movement of souls, since ideas are effective only when accepted by souls and incarnated in them, and since the great souls are few and the small souls are many, *the only way to move your movement is to move the little souls that make up its mass.* That is the way gravitation works: it moves a planet by moving the particles that compose the planet; just so the tides are produced: the moon's drawing power attracts each little molecule of water. And what Jesus has chosen to subject himself to, and the nature of things compels,

we have no cause to complain of. We can well be frankly thankful that it is so. It is good for everybody.

It is good for both the little people and the great, because it calls a halt to the possible conceit and tyranny of the men with the big ideas. What would happen if the pressure of fifteen pounds to the square inch, now exerted by the presence and resistence of the conservative many, were removed? It is well also that the great man cannot have his way all at once; in too many cases he would ride roughshod over his lesser neighbors. No man is big enough, for his own sake or for others' sakes, to have free right of way over the lives of his fellow men without their veto- or their voting-power. And even where the will and ideas of certain progressive souls are just about what they ought to be, the necessity of stopping in the face of that task of persuasion, of presenting the reasonable aspects of our truth to the every-day folk who do the voting, is a wonderful selecter and clarifier of ideas.

And what a glorious scheme of God it is for *giving the little people a share with the great!* They could not conceive the ideas themselves, or plan, or execute; they have not the vision, or force, or constructive power. But they can elect. They can put the great president into office; they can sustain him with wish and will and word; he can feel at his back the mighty force of their united sympathy and purpose. They are not great bankers, not five-talented men, or even two; one talent seems almost a hyperbole for their ability. But they can bring their little investment to the bank, and in the great leaders' use of that mighty aggregate God will receive his own again with interest. That I may work in with Luther as he strides forth a mighty champion of the faith, that my mite of power can swell the strength of Paul in his undying work for Christ, that Jesus Christ himself in his glorious conquest

of the world has me for a partner—what a wonder, what a gracious plan of God! As I look ahead of me and behold the glorious army of the martyrs, prophets, saints, apostles, who see what I never could have seen without them, who do what I could never have done without them, I exult that "God hath prepared some better thing for us, that they without us should not be made perfect."

Nor is this a concession to the mere selfishness of the small, which wants to have a share, to be counted in. It is *God's declaration of the value of humanity,* of the single man as man. The great man is *only* a man. The little man *is* a man. The things whereby the great man excels are not really the essential things. He may have more insight, more outlook, more will, more purpose, more power than the other. But the other *has* insight, outlook, will, purpose, and power too. It is by virtue of what the leader has which the rest have not that the great visions are first seen, the great plans first conceived; but it is by virtue of what they all have in common that the great deed is finally accomplished. And so the Father says to this especially endowed brother-man who would rush so royally ahead, "Wait a moment, my son, for your brothers, my other sons. It is they with you, and you with them, that work out my will."

How blessed it is, then, for us all! Let this heaven-inspired leader gladly pay his price. Let him teach, and plead, and persuade, and beseech. Let him mark time with his impatient foot now and then while the others catch up. Let him besiege the resistance of men. It is worth it all; for him, and for them, and for the world. It was worth it when William the Silent sent forth his floods of letters to every part of Holland, urging, warning, encouraging, directing, till a new nation rose out of the sea. And it was worth it when our Lord endured, and waited,

and blessed, and loved, and suffered, and died, that he might gather out of every land the innumerable company of those he taught at length to love him. He sees of the travail of his soul and is satisfied. It may be humiliation to pay that price. But it is also glory.

And we of the lesser stature? For us the open eye and mind and heart, and the courageous will, that we may see our teachers when they come. Are there not new causes, new ideas, new hopes—or better still, the old causes in a new guise—aflame in the world today? Shall we break some other leader's heart as he sees that we will have none of his holy and stirring message? Shall the votes of our hostility or indifference again "snow under" some great new forward movement? Or shall the power of our love and zeal and prayer and work leap to the side of this new need and win the victory for God? The ballots are in our hands. As we vote, the election goes—today.

XXIII

TAKING FOR GRANTED

One great fraction of all the difficulties and troubles we bring upon ourselves and others is caused by our taking too much for granted. Another great fraction arises from our not taking enough for granted. To take too much for granted is carelessness or presumption; to take too little is pessimism and unbelief. We are inclined to take too much for granted when we deal with unregenerate humanity and with the cooperating human forces. We take too little for granted in our dealing with God and with the people in whom is God's indwelling life.

One of the most frequent causes of ill-success is the ready belief that because we have started a thing, and started it well, it is bound to succeed. "Well begun is half done." But on the other hand it is still half undone; and the proverb needs to be matched with another: "It is the last step that counts." The final quarter of the journey is the most critical and the most costly. The early part was formative, it gave the initial impulse and direction, but now the work is to meet other forces which will test and try it, which will seek to oppose and deflect. We cannot safely leave it till, so far as in us lies, we have seen it through to the end; if we cannot go with it the whole way, we must go as far as we can, and for the residue leave it in the hands of Him who has called us his coworkers, following it with our prayers.

How often some householder builds and lights his furnace fire, does it very likely in the most approved fashion, and then swings off down-town, happy in the conscious-

ness that his loved ones will be warm and comfortable all day; when in reality they are miserably shivering because he did not wait to see that that fire actually was accomplishing its work! He did not reckon on the fact that appearances are deceptive.

The "hit or miss" firing is so common in all our work. We sound our call, we plant our seed, we start our wireless waves, we discharge our artillery, and we assume that somehow they will reach their mark, do their work. In religious labor, how often it is said with an air of great faith, great assurance, "Oh, the word of God is seed; it can be trusted; plant it; it will grow." The word of God *is* living and powerful and sharper than any two-edged sword; its highest success *does* depend upon subtle and supernatural forces which are not in our control, but in the hands of the Giver of the harvest; he *is* interested in bringing to pass a great and abundant yield: nevertheless he works with us, and he works according to certain definite laws that he has made regarding sowing, growth, and fruitage. We may have, sometimes, to "cast the net on the right side of the ship" with no assignable reason but that it is his command. But with most of our sowing the farming law holds good that no man has a right to reckon his crop till he has it in the barn; till he has seen it through the various stages; loosened the earth around the shoots to let them grow, pushed aside the hindering stones, cut away the competing vegetation, attacked the insect and fungoid marauders, and stayed by it till "all was safely gathered in." "In due season we shall reap, if we faint not."

We take for granted that our children are "coming out all right." Have we not trained them up in the way they should go, planted seeds of good principles and Scripture truth in their minds, surrounded them with the nur-

ture and admonition of the Lord? We will leave it now to the laws of the harvest, or, more piously, to God. "Friend, *tie* thy camel and commit it to God." Scheme, plan, work, pray, agonize, that before your eyes, to your own certain knowledge, by the converting grace of God these seeds shall be brought to germination, and all these things be culminated, clinched, transformed into actual character by a vital religious experience of Jesus Christ. And do not take finally for granted even that work of grace, though you surround it with all the genial atmosphere of your love and expectancy and prayer, until you have seen it settle into shape, and harden into strength, and have done your best to mold it into Christ's image and imbue it with his own power. Right at this point lies the failure of so much of our teaching, our training, our evangelism, our church and Christian work; they do not bring things to a head; they do not clinch things; they do not "follow up"; they take too much for granted.

The true teacher, given requisite time and opportunity, takes little for granted. He knows that if there be in his pupil's mind a fundamental misconception, it may vitiate all his teaching; the pupil may not only fail to get what the teacher gives, but may be getting poison instead, or transmitting it, altered by his misconception, into an explosive compound. The teacher therefore uses a mental probe, "X-ray," anything, to discover the contents of his pupil's mind, then skilfully inserts the truth, then tests it again and again to see that it is there. Assume nothing! Yet we constantly assume a strength in poor human nature that it does not possess.

The mother who does not scrutinize her daughter's companionships, who does not know her hours and haunts (though she should not have any), who does not seek and retain her confidence, who without watchfulness has all

trust in her daughter's goodness and discretion, is exhibiting, not merely the "blindness of virtue," but a careless and criminal presumption from which nothing but the "uncovenanted mercies of God" will avert the penalty of disaster and bitterest humiliation. What a bitter commentary on this statement are the columns of every newspaper of today!

But what we can never err in assuming, can never take too much for granted, is the love and fidelity and purpose and power of God in Christ Jesus. We cannot assume that we can make rash ventures and expect his rescue; nor that we can push our ventures part way and expect him to bring them to perfection when we do not stay by them; nor have we any right to think that his willingness and love and power will necessarily obediently follow just the channels our wish or imagination has laid out for them. All these things are really "tempting God" in one way or another, a presumption which only his great love can save from penalty, and which it does not always so save. But we can reckon with a serene assurance which no outward signs or storms and no inward fears can drive or steal away, that he can "do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think," that his will toward us is omnipotent good-will, and that "to them that love God all things work together for good, even to them that are called according to his purpose." We can never trust too confidently in *him*. When we work, when we battle for the right, when we suffer, when we reel back in seeming defeat, when we seem most utterly alone, some things are absolutely sure: "He is"; "He is a rewarder of them that seek after him"; "Lo, I am with you always."

Armed with this fine art, we shall not expect too much of the forces of nature and humanity, and so do too little for and with them. We shall not tread with too con-

fident a foot on the poor weak bridge of unaided human nature, and so doom ourselves to many a bitter disappointment and load it with a burden it cannot bear. But we will reckon in and build upon the best things in those in whom Christ clearly dwells. And we will be very sure of God.

XXIV

OUR DISAPPOINTING FELLOW CHRISTIANS

Some follower of our common Lord has displayed unchristian feeling; he has not risen to a great opportunity; he has made a great and appalling failure, perhaps committed flagrant sin, perhaps revealed an unsuspected weakness which shows a fissure seemingly penetrating his very depths. It comes to us with a distinct and distressing shock—great, we feel, in exact proportion to our former faith and love. And we do well to be shocked. Our faith and love were small if they did not feel the blow, the thrust, the strain.

But we do well also to remember that these, the bitterest disappointments life can bring, are all "interjected opportunities" for the triumph of Christian love, faith, steadiness. It is ours to see to it that when others disappoint us we do not also disappoint Christ.

There are certain things which at all hazards we must not let this harsh experience do to us. It must not destroy our faith in Christianity and in Christ. One rotten spot in one apple does not condemn the whole barrel. "A Christian has betrayed me; therefore I lose faith in Christ," is a syllogism as fallacious as it is foolish. Let God be true, and every man a liar. Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, and today, yea, and forever, though men shake, slip, and disappear. The sun is in the heavens though a million meteors fall, or even though an actual star should blaze up and vanish.

Nor, though this is much harder to prevent, ought we to allow it to breed and nourish a lingering and bitter re-

sentment against the offender. That neither helps him, heals us, nor hallows the name of our Father and our Christ. A quaint American humorist says that cherishing a grievance is like stuffing a hornet that stung you, and hanging it on the wall to remind you of the bygone smart. Such a persistent feeling shows that the germs of hate in us are stronger than the forces of love. And besides, what right have we to that resentment? The sin is against God, not primarily against us. Who are we, to sit in judgment on our brother, assume divine prerogatives, and "visit" our fellow "with our sore displeasure"?

Almost the greatest misfortune of all will be to let this experience lead us into a settled cynicism and distrust of human nature. Probably a certain bracing of the soul against the possible shocks of disappointment in our fellows must come to be the habit of any one who has any experience of life; but vigilance is one thing, and vitriol is another. To permit the milk of human kindness to be changed into vinegar means substitution of many a sour for the sweets that life can offer in such abundance through human companionship, and it will turn sour many a thing that comes to us sweet. The yellow glasses of cynicism not only show us a false world, but they rob us of the satisfying beauties of the true.

Perhaps one good thing that we can do is to reflect how disappointing we ourselves have certainly been, perhaps at that very moment are. "Ye which are spiritual, restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, looking to thyself, lest thou also be tempted." People are rarely aware at the time how bitterly they are falling short of their friends' ideals for them; they are too full of the purely personal stresses, strains, and passions of the moment. These friends of ours may often have had to exercise fully as much patience with us as we are called upon to exhibit now.

Possibly we expected too much of the brother. This is not pessimism, cynicism, or lack of faith, and not necessarily a lowering of Christian standards. It simply says that very likely we took too much for granted. We formed a "snap judgment"; and we are wrong. He has not made the deep failure we thought. There is much more good than we know.

And then, why should this one failure or sin make us forget the many times when he did not sin, and was, in Christ, fully sufficient for the situation? Shall the five minutes of the earth-shock send into oblivion the lifetime that stood firm? The earthquake will be over soon. For us it is over now, if we will only regain and keep our soul's balance. Is it just, in our estimate, to pick out the one failure and pass over the long fidelity? It is not only love and charity, but the best of really good policy, to estimate every man at his full average—nay, rather, at his highest.

How satisfying, too, to remember the people who never have disappointed us, especially our ever-faithful One. Two women at the seaside are types of ever-existing humanity. "Smell that foul tidal-mud out there!" said one. "No, I prefer to smell those fresh pine-boards," said the other. The glorious army of saints and martyrs and good, straight, faithful Christians are all around us, and he who never disappointed saint or sinner is here with us and in us. What matter if a few subsidiary props give way? "The firm foundation of God standeth, having this seal, The Lord knoweth them that are his: and, Let every one that nameth the name of the Lord depart from unrighteousness." When side-ropes snap, strengthen grip on the great central cable. There are always men and women on whom the heart can rest, and always Jesus.

But to the heart that has the Spirit of Jesus what a

challenge this disappointment sounds out! It is a challenge to the power of real Christian love to show what it is made of, what is its length and breadth and height and depth. The street urchin defined a friend as "a feller that knew all about you and yet he liked you." Was your friendship a creature of your ignorance? Was it a child of the sunshine alone, perishing with the storm and the chill? Surely a friend loveth at all times, and a brother is born for adversity. If ye love them that are wholly lovely, what thank have ye? Any mirror can reflect the glow that strikes upon it; any thermometer can record the surrounding temperature. But it takes good oil or a mighty dynamo to send out a light that shines undimmed through mist and cloud and dark; good anthracite to conquer the resisting chill. Is my love a prime mover, a fountain, a throbbing life, which can subdue environment and continue to bless, to see good, to love on though disappointed?

Our friend's deep moral obliquity, if it be that, even his disgraceful failure, his shameful lack; is it not the highest possible appeal to our sympathy and love? A physical lameness, weakness, fever, would call forth our instant compassion. The worse it were, the more our hearts would go out to him. Why not here? We need not think that our revulsion, loathing, almost hatred, instinctive contempt, necessarily show our own high state of spiritual health. It is sick people who shudder at sick people most. The absolutely sound have tides of blood and force that sweep along so buoyantly and powerfully that their nerves cannot readily be disturbed; they perceive, they feel, they are not distressed, save with pity; they are not unbalanced. Your shudder bulletins your own condition. The deeper his need, the wider his deflection, the more he needs, and the more his need demands your loving sympathy. Shall

you love and pity me when my body alone is wounded, or my soul's skin only is pricked, and turn from me when the sword has pierced the depths of spiritual being, has hurt me to the heart?

And so the failure of a Christian friend is a challenge for us to work with God for the spiritual cure of that friend. Of course we shall not undertake that cure in any spirit of superiority, patronage, or rash confidence in our own powers. We shall not undertake it at all, in fact. We can only very humbly ask Christ to work and to use us as he will. We can surround that friend with the atmosphere of our prayer and love and hope. We can brush up against him unobtrusively with whatever strength and brotherliness we have. His need, being our opportunity, is our obligation; and even if we rightly suffer over his failure, the more we suffer, the more sorely he needs us.

Sometimes one takes into his arms a beloved, fevered form, in which an insidious, dreaded, hated disease is working. Physically, because he himself is not wholly well, every fiber of him shrinks from that fevered touch, but neither look nor grasp of his gives any sign; the arms' pressure does not waver nor the heart-throb weaken; they are all the stronger. Oh, to work with God for the healing of that fevered soul, to be a partner with Christ in the strengthening of those feeble knees, the opening of those blinded eyes! We may not penetrate the mystery of permitted evil or the depths where the sovereignty of God touches the springs of human liberty; but in the glorious openings which these things give for loving, triumphant witnessing of Christ's presence and power, let us recognize, even in the bitter disappointment, " his appointment."

GOLD-THREAD OVERCASTINGS

EAGLE AND SPARROW

Upborne on the rush of his pinions strong
He sweeps from peak to peak along—
God's eagle, mounting on mighty wing
To the upmost height of thought and thing.
Bound to the earth and the haunts of men,
The heights and the depths beyond her ken,
Her wings can spread but in pigmy flight;
God's little sparrow, frail and slight.

One goal, be the path over cloud or clod,
For eagle or sparrow—the heart of God!
What he may reach on his wing of might
Is hers for that humble, earthbound flight;
He from his crag hath found his Rest,
She on God's altar hath built her nest.
Eagle or sparrow, whichever we be,
Teach us, O Father, the way to thee!

—Philip Wendell Crannell.

XXV

THE BLESSINGS OF A CATHOLIC TASTE

Next after true religion, industry, adaptability, and a cheerful spirit, the most valuable single gift of a "fairy godmother," or rather, a kind providence, with the man's own coworking, is a catholic taste. It is a potent help to all the other gifts. A catholic taste is the ability to appreciate and enjoy everything that is properly enjoyable, no matter how different in degree or in kind it may be from other enjoyable things, even though on free choice one might enjoy some of these things much better. It is, in short, *liking* the largest possible number of things.

A catholic taste in foods is readily hospitable to every sort, though of course it has its preferences, because "catholicity" is neither ignorance, dulness, nor indifference. A catholic taste in books does not confine itself to one class, style, author, country, or epoch, but ranges the world of good literature, and "all is fish that comes to its net," though it has no difficulty in distinguishing between the sluggish carp and the lively trout. A catholic taste in "folks" finds genuine delight in the company of all sorts of good people, of every grade of cultivation and attraction, and "counts nothing human [except the vile] alien to itself," although some humans are much more congenial than others.

In morals, of course, *there can be no "catholicity."* Right is right. Wrong is wrong. And yet in the manners and ways which with many rise almost to the importance of morals, this genial appreciation of inner values within outer coverings can find things to like in very unlikely

cases. A catholic taste in religion? Assuredly. Not in the great fundamentals! Truth is truth again, and error is error. Certainly not to the point of lax indifference and complaisance toward great systems of mistake or deception that entrap mind and soul. In the various modes and manifestations of religion that appeal to different people according to their temperament and training, the wise and loving Christian finds something good and helpful, and can enter into their spirit, though they may not forcibly appeal to him. Placed in some rather severe, unemotional, intellectual form of the religious life he can understand that and find pleasure and help in it. In a more sensuous, emotional atmosphere, with its shouts and hallelujahs, he has no feeling of anything like disgust, though it is not of his own particular type, but joys in his fellows' joy, and enters into that joy. For the man whose religion, while deep and true, expresses itself in social action rather than in verbal utterance, he has a profound respect (though he wishes there might be more of spiritual thrill and power in the man), and he often finds satisfaction in joining in his work.

Such a taste, to put it on the lowest plane, *saves one a deal of trouble.* Dissatisfaction, discontent, disgust are thickly spread around, and in, the man who lacks it. How unhappy are the people who, both literally and metaphorically, would enjoy roast turkey but must put up with salt pork, and how many there are! He who has learned in whatsoever state he is therefrom to extract every ounce or every grain of satisfaction of which it is capable, will never waste any time in grumbling, never quarrel with his fellow men, never complain against his God.

He has fallen heir, positively, to richer hoards than those of Crœsus. The finder of a "bee-tree" has no advantage over him, for everything he meets yields honey.

Where a person can enjoy only one limited range of foods, how narrow is his circle of satisfaction! And how all the treasure-houses of all the world open before him who has this other happy disposition to enter, this capacity to absorb! Think of the choice of pleasures, well-nigh numberless, from which the soul with the narrow taste is shut out, the pictures that fail to enrich us, the music whose unfelt harmonies never get into our spirits, the gold-mines of friendship we pass blindly or contemptuously by, the religious fervors with which we might warm our cold hearts if we would but let ourselves stay with them a while, with open, expectant, perceptive minds.

Yet enjoyment, however intense, varied or full, is not "man's chief end," but *growth, power, usefulness.* And here this man with a catholic taste is the developing man. He is expanding daily. "I am a part of all I have met." "All I have met are a part of me." Much truer is it that "All I have liked are a part of me." These have really entered into my soul and been absorbed into its substance. Every now and then we see a symposium, "Men That I Have Known," "Books That Have Helped Me," and the like. The narrow limits of our minds to start with, and the narrow limits to which we are self-sentenced, are expressed in "Men I Don't Care for," "Books I Will Not Read," "Pictures That Do Not Appeal to Me." "We do not like" French literature or Russian or Italian. "We do not like" history or poetry or science. The contributions these might make to our mind's richness we foolishly pass by—the mental growth and girth, the cultivation of our imagination or reason or sympathy or power of outlook. We sentence ourselves to dwarfhood.

There is no glory in a non-catholic taste. It is a disgraceful self-revelation. It displays us as meager, scanty, undeveloped by nature, training, or choice. The people

who "cannot" eat fish are most often found far inland, and usually have been brought up on a limited diet. Men's dislikes proclaim them provincials. Their likes, if wide, proclaim them by training or by spirit cosmopolitan, citizens of the whole round world.'

The lack may show, what exists too often, a want of flexibility, flexibility of will or flexibility of mind. Your mind has been set to like certain things, and not to like others, and you cannot change, or you will not change—it is hard to say which is the less lovely or the more hopeless state. There is no particular reason that you can assign for liking or not liking, at least no sufficient one, but "there you are":

> I do not love thee, Doctor Fell.
> The reason why I cannot tell;
> But this I know, and know full well—
> I do not love thee, Doctor Fell.

Perhaps what it reveals is incasement in a sublime self-conceit, sure that the impressions we have on any subject and the feelings we experience toward any person, fact, or thing are the "reaction" of an infallible sense, of a moral, intellectual, or spiritual touchstone that is absolutely correct, that cannot be deceived. A certain really great man, who perhaps had an opinion of himself that not even that greatness could justify, was represented as saying: "What is to be known, I know it. And what I don't know, isn't knowledge." "What I like is the finest in the world, and what I don't like isn't likable."

This "don't like it" spirit assuredly betrays a lamentable lack of penetration, of the power to pierce below surface indications, tastes, smells, looks, to the real substance. The man cannot see inner values. He knows only what his eyes or his fingertips or his nose, tell him. The miners used to kick contemptuously aside what they called "heavy

porphyry." Some one came along and recognized in it one of the most valuable of ores. Barring glaring moral defects, if there is anybody in this world we "do not like" it is a sure sign that we "have left our eyes at home," and are near-sighted, color-blind, and superficial. We are fooled by the outside of things, and even the best and the highest may be passed by. Jesus Christ himself may come and go unreceived, because unrecognized. In our eyes there "was no beauty that we should desire him." The habit of non-liking is the thief and jailer of the soul. The story sounds like too acid a condemnation to be true, but they say that when it was reported to Robert Louis Stevenson that Matthew Arnold was dead, he was silent a while and then drawled out, "He—won't—like—God."

The narrow taste also makes as much trouble for the people around him as it does for the man himself, or more. He is responsible for the larger share of the housewife's wrinkles and gray hairs. The task of providing for a family in which are a number of these people would try an angel's grace and ingenuity. The older sister in a motherless home of this sort who is able reasonably to keep the peace and her own sweetness of mind is a combination of general, inventor, and saint, worthy of rarest honor among men. One such intractable set of likes and dislikes is hard enough, but where one is, usually more are, and the difficulties increase as the square of the number. When this narrow taste expresses itself in religion or politics or the social relationships it is the fruitful source of most of the misunderstandings, disagreements, strifes, and wars. Sects and parties are mostly born of this, and even where they are not directly its children, this is the assiduous foster-mother under whose care they flourish like the green bay-tree. Half of them would be impossible without it.

If the man kept only himself narrow, that would be pity indeed, but one such meager set of likes and mountain of dislikes keeps the rest of us from having what we want and need and ought to have. He cannot eat fish, and we must never eat trout. He does not like "emotion," and we must never shout our Christian joy. He objects to phonographs, and the household must be toneless. Blessed is the man who likes everything everybody else likes, for then he and all he deals with may have a fully rounded life.

With the "grown-ups" who on taking stock find themselves in possession of a mind full and heart full of propensities and affinities, of aversions and antipathies, the case is hard, but the matter, in spite of all, is by God's grace in their own hands. They can like what they set out to like—not everything alike, but everything somewhat. They can get themselves a new set of likes, and discard their dislikes. They must not resemble the little girl who said, "I'm glad I do not like so-and-so, for then I'd have to eat 'em, and I don't like 'em." If there is one Christian duty almost above all others it is the duty of a catholic taste.

For the stock of likes and dislikes with which we find ourselves, parents are principally to blame. Very few aversions are really hereditary. Most are the fruit of a child's wilfulness or wavering, and of the parents' unwise strictness or unwise indulgence. Tact, firmness, patience, example can make a child like anything he ought to like. The Hebrews felt that he who brought up a son without giving him a trade was bringing him up for disaster and perdition. The case here is not quite so bad, but after the life in Christ and the equipment for useful work, you could not bestow on a child a better gift than the power to like. "I don't like it" is the one thing no child should be taught, or even be suffered to learn, to say.

XXVI

INTEREST THE INDEX OF OUR LIFE

Interest is the response we make to the world of fact and thought with which we come into contact. Sometimes it seems as unaccountable as the wind, blowing "where it listeth," and with as little discernible reason. Why a man should turn with concern and with keen intellectual pleasure to one thing, and why another thing should not be able to get him to lift his heavy-lidded eyes to look at it, would seem unexplainable. And why different men should look with interest on such different things is equally beyond our unraveling. More than that, interest seems often completely outside of our power, working in regions of the soul far below our will. This or that lesson does not stick in our minds, because, as we say, we cannot take interest in it. We ought to take interest, we determine to take interest, but the interest will not come. These arrows of truth are barbless; they slip out of mind and heart. Then, perhaps, "something happens," some rearrangement of the molecules of the soul, some new alinement of forces, and the lessons or ideas "catch," we "take interest" now.

Yet no more than the wind is this strange thing really unaccountable. The forces that bring it about are all natural. We cannot read them, because they lie too deep for our perception; we cannot predict them, because they are too many and too complex for our calculation. They may be as hard to prognosticate as the weather, but they are as completely under law.

The map of our interests is simply a cross-section of

the soul; it reveals, to him who can read it, what our past history has been, what our original outfit of attractions was, and what the real affinities of our souls are today. He whose interest is found altogether in the world of "sport" is shown to be one who had originally a certain turn of mind, who has now certain impulses and propulsions of nature, or has been brought up amid certain surroundings. This cross-section is a very deep one; it goes far beneath the things we would like to present as our real characters, below even our formal and determined aspirations, to the very bedrock of being. It is as relentless as gravity, and as undeceivable. It is true there may be deep possibilities of interest yet unawakened; but till they are awakened they are, to all intents and purposes, nonexistent. The steel may be capable of being magnetized, but if it does not turn quivering to the pole you know that it has not yet received the subtle touch.

Interest is simply the answer which life makes to environment; and it is therefore the answer to any question you may wish to ask about that life in its actual quality, power, and condition.

It tells the story of life's size, how wide it is, how long, how inclusive. Narrow interests, narrow life. It is a small soul that can rest snugly and comfortably around one little self, one little family, one little business, one little town, one little country. By just as many realms of fact and life as a man's concern and sympathy fail to touch, you know just how many regions of his nature lie uninhabited, undeveloped. How rich a soul is his whose intellectual appetite and heart yearning take in the whole world as it lies under the love and longing of Jesus Christ! He who has no world interest has no world soul.

And our interests indicate the quality and stature of our life. Macaulay's Sandwich Islander was brought in front

of the splendid face of St. Paul's Cathedral, looked up a minute, and then ran into a toyship and began to play with beads. The objects that pass through a perforated plate indicate the size of the holes. As the stream of outer life passes over us, the ingredients which our soul's surface selects reveal its own quality. How pure, how spiritual, how material, how unselfish, how refined, how gross are our interests? So pure, or spiritual, or refined, or gross, are we.

Interest indicates as infallibly the intensity, the real force, of our life-power. Languid interests, languid soul. One may insist that he really has the capacity for more ardent, intenser movement, for deeper, wider, stronger vibrations of the heart's harp-strings and the mind's organ-pipes. But till those actually sound, all this is mere assertion, genial self-hope. In the presence of the intensely vibrating heart of Jesus Christ our Lord, in the presence of the living God who is a consuming fire against all sin and a consuming love so great that he gave his only begotten Son, we must repent in dust and ashes that we care so little, that the things which the very angels in heaven desire to look into awake so little answer in our souls. Alas, the feeble or stiffened chords of our harp of life!

So any man can take the measure of his own life. How many things does he care for, what things does he care for, how much does he care for them? The index finger points; no man can say it nay.

But the index does not have to remain where it is now. Elusive, spontaneous, uncontrollable as interest appears to be, it is not wholly so. It cannot be permanently moved by any external force, any more than the pointer of a spring scale can be; it will take its old place when the compelling hand is removed. But it can be moved by a change in the inner directive forces. There

are some things which can be done. Indirectly the cogs and wheels of life can be given a new arrangement and a new motion.

The attention can be turned upon that region where interest is desired until habit begins to work, and repeated thought and act engrave the wished-for groove in the mind. Putting forth the activity of interest long enough will often, if not always, get the soul to acting with real care and appetite. Better than this, if the object be worthy, mind and heart will find there so many attractive, alluring, appealing things that the flame will kindle, grow, and spread. In such fashion love grows, and so grows interest.

Given a really vital, energetic mind, there is hardly any realm where it may not presently catch fire. And the soul naturally absorbs the things in which it is immersed. Glass long exposed to violet rays becomes violet tinted, and henceforth is a violet medium, "subdued to what it works in."

There is a strange force too, exerted upon details of life which in themselves may be colorless or inert. Gladstone was a dullard in figures, we are told, till as a statesman and patriot he grappled with the problems of his country's economy and finances. Then, in his mind and in his hands, they became full of poetry and power. What will not the passion for Jesus Christ do to broaden and deepen and purify our interests?

Is there something else? Surely. That wonderful work of God in the human soul which we call regeneration is from one point of view simply this—the realinement and recrystallization of the elements and forces of the soul around the love of God for us and our love for God, so that a new interest has become supreme and is beginning to transform all lesser interests by its power into its own

likeness. God wrought it, and God is working at it still, and will work, until every thought has been brought into captivity to the obedience of Christ, and all the powers have been deepened and sweetened into blessed harmony and likeness to him, while he worketh in us both to will and to work for his good pleasure. When this cross-section of our minds reveals gaps, deficiencies, distortions, shallows, may we not, shall we not, ask and expect that his grace will cause our love to abound yet more and more in knowledge and all discernment, that we may approve the things that are excellent, and hunger and thirst after the highest till not one sound or thought to which a human spirit should vibrate shall fail to awaken our God-given response?

XXVII

THE GLORY OF DEPENDENCE

The glory of independence is a familiar thought. It *is* a glory. To live a life that is able, competent, self-sustaining, so-called; walking on your own two feet, supporting yourself by the sturdiness of your own backbone, doing your own tasks, bearing your fair share of life's loads, helping others to bear theirs—this surely is to be prized, desired, striven for. It is the mark of manhood and of womanhood. We ought to be independent of both people and things. And yet, if our "independence" is not filled with the Christian meaning and motive, and continually balanced by what seems the exactly opposite idea, it is all wrong; foolishly, unnecessarily, suicidally, brutally, and even diabolically wrong.

Now the summit of even human attainment is not to "become an island," self-limited, self-bounded, self-centered, self-supported. He whose wants have been reduced to a minimum is not the ideal man. "Only stand out of my sunlight," the surly cynic said when the great man asked him what he could do for him. But the cynic had not reached his own ideal! "Nothing, absolutely nothing," should have been his answer, if indeed he made any. For what "philosopher" cares for either sun or its absence?

No; the chief glory of mere human life is its dependence, the sure index and the cause of the things that make for real human greatness. The half-savage dweller in the Mexican mountains is physically independent; his wants have been reduced to a minimum. He is full

brother to our cynic philosopher Diogenes. A handful of parched corn, a thin blanket, a "place in the sun"—for sleeping—is all he wants. But his existence is mere vegetating. The civilized man, who has learned to want a hundred articles of diet where this man wants but one, who must have a hundred physical comforts, who must be surrounded by objects that minister to his ease, please the eye, enrich life with beautiful forms, is worth a thousand of that other—vegetable. He is worth more, precisely because his power of enjoyment, his power of wish, his force of will, go out to meet life at the points of contact of these multiplied and multiplying *wants*. Provided it is for a legitimate thing, sought in the right proportion and by the right means, you can hardly give a man a greater gift than to bestow on him a new want. These added wants not merely enrich his nature, they send him out into the world of men and force him to be himself a force and a producer. To be enslaved to things is, it is true, to be servile. To need, and get, and control them, is to be king. Complete independence of things, if that were possible, would be to dry up life to a shred, to seal it away in a vacuum.

In our mere human relations to our fellows, too, dependence is our glory. The hermit soul is the shriveled soul. The heart that needs men most is the heart with the most avenues for imparting and receiving. We "feel the need of a world of men"; we hunger for the give-and-take of smiles and words and handclasps and tears. As sensitive as the seismograph which records earth's slightest tremor, as receptive as the thirsty ground after the long drought, quivering like the electroscope with the ceaseless vibrations of the human world, homesick when we are obliged to miss these things—is not this true human life? It means pain, loss, even agony, when we fail of our supply

or get the wrong one; but who would not have nerves that shiver at a discord if that were the condition of having nerves that vibrate with the celestial harmonies? We must have dependence, if we are to have fulness.

"From whom all the body fitly framed and knit together through that which every joint supplieth, according to the working in due measure of each several part, maketh the increase of the body unto the building up of itself in love." Fancy a "joint" which has declared independence and is wandering about in business for itself! What business? It has no significance then except that of embezzlement or disease. It must either leave the body or, mechanically, stay inside. If it leaves, it has robbed the body of what it ought to supply and has robbed itself of what the body ought to supply it. If it stays inside it is a "foreign" substance, interrupting the legitimate flow of supply through the several joints, an inflammation, an ulcer, a canker.

So never yet was there an independent man. Every human being on earth is a dependent. He is somebody's son. Normally he is to be somebody's father. He is somebody's neighbor to be helped and to help. Absolute independence would mean absolute detachment, and absolute uselessness, and absolute arrest of growth, and final atrophy of all that is best in human nature. It is in the inflow of what men do for us, almost or quite as much as in what we do for them, that growth comes. He who has not in his hour of need leaned hard on some other soul, felt the thirsty pores of his own spirit flooded by human sympathy and help, has done more than miss the sweetest comfort; he has failed to send forth some of the rarest blooms of human character—faith, and trust, and love, and gratitude. Dead of suffocation would be any soul that shut out all his fellows can do for him.

But dependence has its richest, its supremest, its central gleam in our relation with God. "Blessed are the poor in spirit: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness: for they shall be filled." No independence here; nothing but a great emptiness, a great hunger, a great willingness, and a great desire that God shall be all in all. The soul that in the presence of God and his grace can have any thought or lingering hold on its own strength or size and, of all things, can be satisfied in them, proclaims its own smallness, its own blindness, its own hopelessness.

Dependence here puts us into our real and wholesome place. "What hast thou that thou didst not receive"? Lucifer detests dependence. The "younger son" wants the "portion of thy substance that *falleth* to me." But he who is really son feels no degradation or deprivation as he looks into his Father's face and says, "All mine is thine." To be the satellite of the central Sun of righteousness—what planet is great enough to be too proud for that? This is my glory, that I should revolve around him and no other, do his will and no other's, reflect his splendor and no other's. How could I wish my own cooling fires and my unguided rush through untracked darkness rather than that blessed orbit round my Sun?

A satellite? No. Cold and mechanical is that conception compared with the reality. No satellite; above all, no parasite; but one of his own members! When I am most dependent I am most in him, and he in me. The finger on the hand is most free to be itself, when it is most dependent. By so much as you tie around it that constricting cord of severance that you call independence, by so much you shut off the inflowing life, by so much you hinder that finger from being what it is its right to be. When it knows no life apart from the mighty hand, when

no self-will clogs the channels of supply, then, and then only, may it gloriously be itself. He who lets Christ be all in all to him, Source, Life, Sanctification, Victory, he, most dependent, is most independent.

The wise man cultivates dependence. On things, with a wide and catholic choice, but with a reserve of separate individual resource to which, at need, he can flee. On men, with even less of such reserve, finding inexpressible sweetness in leaning hard on human strength and drawing much from human love. On Christ, with no reserve at all, conceiving in his highest height when in every moment, for everything, in every way, he is depending nothing on himself, but all on him.

XXVIII

PASSIONS IGNOBLE AND NOBLE

The history of the world's movement up or down is the history of the world's passions. Some things are done by routine, some from cold sense of duty, and some by the pressure of circumstance; but the things that move forward with zest and energy and power, with triumphant success for good or evil, are those into which the swelling, imperious tide of feeling or desire enters with its propulsive, dominating force.

Both humiliating and inspiring are the spectacles which men present under passion's resistless stress and sway, revealing how high the human soul can rise, and how low it can fall. But wherever passion ranges, there is power or the counterfeit of power.

There are those who feel that passion, the utter absorption in some ruling aim or love, is almost necessarily a noble thing, because it lifts one out of indifference, timidity, and sloth. For them the unlit lamp and the ungirt loins is the sin of sins. They would almost excuse the transgression of the "woman that was a sinner in the city" by an utter perversion of our Lord's words, and say, "Her sins which are many are forgiven her, for she loved much," since even in her sin she cast aside cold-blooded calculation (which may or may not be true). Better, these would say, a glowing fire, though kindled at wrong altars, than the frigid deadness of an arctic soul.

By others, any passion is held to be precisely what the original meaning of the word imports, a "weakness," a "thing suffered." The man who is swept along by any

overpowering emotion is, like him who is "in a passion," the prey of other forces than his own reason, self-control and will; he has yielded the helm of his life's ship; he has done what no man ought to do: let something else usurp the governance of his soul. The Stoic philosopher who sat on the imperial throne of Rome was annoyed, disgusted, outraged, by the madness of that obstinate sect which let itself be carried away by such intemperate zeal and love and determination as marked the followers of Jesus. In later days, those who sneered at the "consecrated cobblers" who presumed to think about conquering the world for Jesus Christ were filled with supreme contempt for the men whose new-born faith and hope floated them above all the restraints of social station, of worldly prudence, of threatened ostracism, of ease and comfort, and made them, whether high-born or low-born, flaming apostles of Jesus Christ to their fellow men. Passion then was enthusiasm, and enthusiasm was nearly or quite "fanaticism"; it was a sign of an unbalanced mind, a sort of "possession"; in modern phrase, "obsession," which captured the will, dethroned the reason, and swept the man along, a helpless plaything, an object of pitying disgust to all sane and healthy-minded people.

And indeed *passion is either the basest and most dangerous thing* that can seize a human life, or *the highest summit of human character,* devotion, and wisdom. It is the fire from hell that sets aflame the whole wheel of nature, or it is "the zeal of thine house" which hath eaten me up, the love of Christ which constraineth me.

Which it is depends chiefly on the object of one's passion. If that is lower than the soul that seeks it, than the soul's own higher possibilities, then to be swept away by this longing is a degradation as well as a sin. When Shakespeare pictures for us the fairy Queen Titania

fondling the ass's ears of the rough peasant, under the tricksy enchantment that makes her see in his uncouthness all beauties and all perfection, the poet is delivering a most tremendous and withering satire on every soul who lets himself be mastered by sensual or worldly aims. That a man should be carried out of himself, and away from right and truth and decency and God, by the glint of "yellow dust"; that he should forget honor and truth at the sight of a fair face; that he should lose all sense of proportion, of right, of obligation, in his zeal for a real or figurative crown; that he should let a distillation of the product of microbes, known as alcohol, become his king, may well make one ashamed of human nature. In seeking those things he has sunk lower than the things he seeks; they are *un*moral; he is *im*moral, a fallen son of God who has put on the livery and the shackles of the earthly, a spirit who has become the bondslave of the flesh.

But when some man is led to divine forgetfulness by a noble vision; when a mother is deaf, blind, senseless, to all considerations which would negative her great love; when the truth-seeker cannot find time to make money, forgets even to eat, and cannot sleep because of the fire in his brain—surely earth has few nobler sights than these. Except it be, as it certainly is, the man who is swept along by a desire that will not let him rest as he hungers and thirsts after righteousness; the man who cannot stop anywhere because his love for human rescue will not let him pause; the man whose whole heart has gone out in adoring admiration, in utter self-abnegation, complete surrender, to the only One altogether lovely. They who have found these passions have voted, in their deepest being, for the highest in the universe, and each tide bears them upward. Nothing so marks high character, wisdom, re-

sponsiveness to God, as this passion. By virtue of it, these are or will be the world's great souls.

"Nothing too much" is the "moderate's" motto, applied to nearly or quite everything under the sun, even to a mother's love for her child or a Christian's for his God. But there are things that are not "under the sun," but over it: God, his righteousness, his grace, and his work. We sometimes hear of "intemperate temperance advocates." Some may not be always wise in the expression of their zeal, or quite charitable in their view of others less zealous than themselves, but no fiery zeal of hate toward alcohol can be too great for the devilishness of the thing itself or the pitifulness of its victims. "Intemperateness" is impossible here; "temperateness" is shameful dulness, sloth, or hard-heartedness. Passion for anything which does not deserve it is sin; lack of passion for that which is worthy of passion is, if possible, greater sin. No one can really love money too little, or Jesus Christ too much, have too little real heart care for place and praise, or too much for the rescue of men or the priceless pearl of righteousness. To be mastered by desire for that which is too low is to fall toward or beneath the brute; not to be mastered by longing for God and righteousness is never to have become a man.

And *how splendid the lifting force of the passions for God and his work!* They do not float us from the moorings of right, they fasten us the firmer; they do not rob us of our clearness of vision, they rid us of the obstructions to vision, even our selfishness and sin; so far from paralyzing our power of strong and steady thought, they stimulate, direct, and strengthen it; in no way do they decrease our self-control, they summon it to highest exercise, and flood out the rival powers that would prevent self-mastery. They lift us away from littleness and self-

seeking, out of low and corrupting thought and feeling. For these and they cannot live together; one or other must leave, and this holy passion is king. And how many things they lift us into! Into the region where pure and high and clean thoughts are dwelling: into the region of the unselfish and the loving; into the atmosphere of the Spirit of God; into the company and into the heart of Jesus Christ. They never raise us above the plane where a man must put forth his intensest exercise of will and thought; we are never, like the subjects of Apollo's fabled inspiration, borne along delirious, unconscious, intoxicated. But they do flood our souls so that the things that would be hard are easy, and the things that would be impossible, though still hard, are gloriously achieved. Timidity flooded out, envy flooded out, self-love flooded out, complaining flooded out, sins great or small which once so easily beset us flooded out—on that full tide, Lord Jesus, lift us every one!

XXIX

THE PASSION FOR CHRIST

The great need of our age, and its great lack, is passion, that swelling tide of intense emotion, that outflow of love and desire to serve, which lifts a man up over his selfishness, his sordidness, his timidity, his indolence, and sweeps him on to high and heroic endeavor, not for one splendid spasmodic effort alone, but steadily driving him through the months and years and decades. We have intelligence, system, ingenuity, intellectual force, and are conducting God's enterprises with commendable insight, outlook, practicality and energy, but we lack that glowing heat which not only kindles us but is supremely indispensable if we are to fire others; which not only fuses our own souls into incandescence, but melts the men we seek, so that they can be molded for Christ.

Every great age of the church, every great spiritual leader, has had this quality; and the Christian, or the Christianity, that lacks it can never forward very effectively the world's conquest. What gave the early Christians their conquering force was not simply the amazed, and to the onlooker, amazing, confidence and buoyant sense of power, it was even more the way in which Jesus had absorbed their love, and thrilled the deepest vibrations of their hearts. Paul, Peter, John, were at the base not church-founders, men-seekers, truth-proclaimers; they were, with all the passionate devotion of self-forgetful hearts, Jesus-lovers, on fire with love for Jesus Christ. In the long run, and at the foundation, there is only one passion which has an adequate source and object, a sufficient power, an

abiding persistency; and that is this passion for Jesus. The passion for Jesus is the white-hot adoration and affection for one altogether worthy, altogether inspiring, altogether satisfying, love for whom touches the very depths of being and the very heights of God. It is never easy to analyze an overwhelming, all-controlling emotion, and yet a study of its elements may help us to gain, or regain, its force and fire.

The indispensable *intellectual* basis for the Christ-passion is an adequate conception of the real being of Christ himself. Not a comprehension, for that is impossible, but an intelligent apprehension. Any idea of him which on the one hand lifts him to the heights of lonely deity, away from his brothers of humanity, and makes him a distant God or a vague metaphysical abstraction, or on the other reduces him to mere human terms and "kisses his godhead away" with whatever caresses of professed affection, is fatal to real, deep, self-effacing adoration and devotion. It takes a whole God-man to inflame any hearts whatever to Johannine or Pauline heats. The merely human Christ, though even then the largest stature of all the ages, is a pigmy figure compared with the "Word made flesh," whose inherent power sways the whole universe with the assured mastery and might of Deity itself, yet whose human fingers touch our fever and our wounds so gently, soothingly, "gentler than tired eyelids upon tired eyes." Whatever may be its metaphysical and theological difficulties, its unplumbed mysteries, the Christ of an intelligent "orthodoxy" is the only Christ who can stir the pulses of warm-blooded humanity to that deep, passionate devotion which is the essence of all true religion. Nobody can be deeply or long enthusiastic about any other.

An intellectual conception is only the basis of an emotion, the fuel of a fire. The *emotional and volitional fount*

of the Christ passion is a living personal experience. Take the classical Christ-lover of all time, the great apostle. *Something had happened to Paul.* There had been a blessed revolution, a cataclysm, an earthquake. He had been broken to pieces and made over. He had fought with his whole being against this strange abhorrent, dangerous sect of the Nazarene, and then the Nazarene had smitten him down and raised him up, dazzled him, blinded him, and flooded his soul with his loving glory. And day by day that Christ was with him in known companionship as the daily friend, as the wellspring of peace and joy and power. Do we say that such cataclysmal experiences are not normal, that they are no longer to be expected, have passed away? If they have passed, then Pauls have passed too.

But they have not passed. Forms and details may change, but the man who feels that God has been marvelously at work in his soul, who knows within himself the blessed facts of regeneration and the powers of the coming age, is the normal Christian now as ever. Very possibly our conviction of sin nowadays may come much more fully after conversion than before, but strive as we may—and ought—for early "natural," unforced conversions and for large Christian nurture, somewhere, somehow, the deep plows of conviction, of the sense of need, and of sin, and of salvation, must furrow the profoundest strata of our souls. A shallow religion, a religion that does not know a personal present Christ, will always be a very mild and restrained religion.

But for genuine passion this personal experience must not lack the note which we find so strongly in Paul and John and Peter, the note of *amazed, adoring gratitude.* "God commendeth his love towards us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for the ungodly." "Herein

is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins." To Paul it was a mystery of mysteries and passionate astonishment that "I obtained mercy," that he "loved me, and gave himself up for me." It is quite obvious that for some reason this is not so very common a note today. We are rather moderate in our enthusiasm. Jesus is the Sun of the Heavens, of course, but as he has always been there in our thinking, and as so many of us grew almost imperceptibly into the consciousness that he is there in our spiritual life, we have not had, and accordingly cannot remember, the sudden raptures of a sunburst. It is not that we do not know that we have been forgiven much, but that we have not felt it very much. But never till from somewhere comes that sense of the amazingly, graciously wonderful salvation, can we have the Pauline passion. And we *can* have it, when we want it above all else, and pray it through. We must have it. Adoring gratitude must take its old place among the Christian feelings. And that can be—but only within the shadow of the cross, God's glorious miracle of love.

Thus born, the Christ-passion is daily fed by a widening and deepening *observation of the power of Christ and the cross* in other human lives. The active Christian worker of the spiritual and evangelistic type, in spite of many disappointments, comes, like Paul or Spurgeon or Jerry McAuley, to have the enthusiasm of the physician for some sovereign remedy, of the gunner for his trusty rifle, of the workman for a peculiarly effective mechanism, of the soldier for his peerless leader. He sees the gospel under so many aspects, sees men and women of such divers sorts reached by it, sees it triumph over such obstacles, perform such wonders, that at last he says with Paul, "I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God

unto salvation unto every one that believeth." It is the soldier out on the firing-line who becomes enthusiastic. The religion that never brings us into real contact with human need, never drives us into the places where life-and-death struggles are taking place, can never be a religion of fire, for it is not a religion of reality, and therefore not a religion of triumph. If we could shake our "family," not to say "fashionable," churches into the "slums" for actual rescue work; if we could sink some of our earnest but essay-writing ministers "down among the dead men," seeking, and by God's grace saving, lost souls; if we could change some of our "evening services" from "musicales" and "preludes" and "lectures" into downright evangelistic efforts "meaning business"—we should find a new flush coming into some pale spiritual cheeks, a new tone into some voices, and a new grip into some hands.

And it is *the hand that grips* that gets the glow. Interest is proportionate to investment. We never get enthusiastic till we sacrifice. No one cheers the flag like the veteran who left a part of himself on the field. The man who suffered the loss of all things for Jesus is thrilled to the depths with love of the Jesus who became poor for him, and for whom he has become poor.

Is such passion possible today? The materials are all here, as ever. The Christ, God's wonder, the same yesterday, today, and forever; the Holy Spirit, with his transforming power; love, the wonder-worker; work, the love-breeder, and human nature as responsive to God through grace, as ever. Our task is to put the materials together and feed and fan the flame. There are new Pauls, and many more of them, yet to come. Some of them are here.

XXX

LIVING IN SIGHT OF HEAVEN

Our life eternal begins at the Jerusalem of this life, but it does not stop there. And the life beyond is the main life. This life is only preliminary, the few hundred feet which the spirit's aeroplane must run in order to take flight into the infinities. What the Christian knows on his Bible's and his Saviour's testimony, science now hazards as a glowing guess, that the life passes into another stage more grand and glorious than this. Is it not supremely wise that in all our calculations we should consider what lies beyond?

> Brief life is here our portion,
> Brief sorrow, short-lived care;
> The life that knows no ending,
> The tearless life, is there.

In spite of all that is good about this life, the other, with its favoring conditions and its freedom from clogging hindrances, is the only true life of the soul. None of us have ever really lived yet; we have gone through a few preparatory motions. Imagine a stage of existence with such a body as Paul describes, "raised in incorruption, in glory, in power"; and with such a soul as John hints at: "we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is"! The best we can get in this world, with all its legislations, its upward trends, its reforms, its alleviations, its physical betterments, its eliminations of evil, even when the now unsaved world shall be raised to the pinnacles of our best earthly sainthood, is infinitely lower than that. Infinitely

lower was even the active, aggressive, happily useful Christian life of the great apostle; for he had a desire to depart and be with Christ, which is very far better. This was not altogether because he was "Paul the aged." He was Paul a son of God; and it did not yet appear what he should be, but he longed for the fulness that was to be revealed in the children of grace. Life now is only in the larva stage. It would be foolish for the tutors of what is to be a spiritual chrysalis to say: "Now, never think about the winged life. Build, work, eat, crawl, on the basis of this alone!" Especially when the lives are continuous, and the spiritual direction, momentum, and acquisition for that life are begun in this. How unwise to forfeit all the advantage of the thought of that larger destiny as a spring and fount of higher quality and force in our inmost life!

And when one talks of practicability, the heaven-goal is much the nearer and the more practicable. We are far surer individually to annex heaven than we are to conquer earth. Other-world prizes are absolutely certain, but not this world's. Nowhere is it written: "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after earthly achievement, for they shall be filled." Humanity moves up very slowly. Great strides have been made toward the conquest of the earth for God, and far greater will be made by the aggregate efforts of his people; but the individual's work and success are those of the coral polyp, hard to distinguish in the general whole, hard to measure in the onward trend. We may have annexed our share of heaven several centuries before earth has been transformed. We would not forego a blessed share in producing that far-off consummation. But why not also aim at something near at hand, and reachable?

For we need this clear, near-by, definite expectation to refresh our spirits and renew our strength. The world is

very good, no doubt of that. But is very evil, too; and we are not deathless angels, but weak, mortal men and women. The plain is the place of duty, and, therefore, hot and dusty as it is, it is better than heaven for us just now, theoretically and really; but how it heartens us up just to get a glimpse of the verdant slopes and snowclad summits of the delectable mountains! We do not ask or want to be transferred just now; and we cannot spend all or much of our time in gazing; but in "the meat" of a swift look now and then we have strength to go forty days.

And how shall the earth-life get richness, depth, size, without the sight of heaven? Here is where a church altogether "of this world" is of no permanent use as a church of any world. It has not the depth, the scope, the flavor, the vitality that human nature needs. Feed the body without feeding the soul, and in the long run you feed neither. And you cannot feed an immortal soul with food from which the eternities are carefully or carelessly left out. Much of our "practical philanthropy" will shortly die the death; it has no grip on the spiritual, which is the eternal. It plants gourds, sedulously excluding oaks. Insist that what humanity needs is soup-kitchens, kindergartens, industrial schools; hush our talk of another life in the endeavor to save this one; and success will come in neither. But keep full in view that in all your philanthropic work, your improving of environments, bodies, and minds, you are simply clearing the way for the immortal spirit to begin here the unending life, and you will send roots deep into the soul which will spring up to bounteous fruitage here as well as hereafter. What men need is to get into contact with God and his power. The philosophy which ignores the future will soon ignore God as a practical factor in our lives.

For life's supreme moments no soul can be ready unless,

through all its course, it has been saturating itself with this constant sense of the heavenly, springing from its constant unobtrusive presence in our thought. Without this no larva will ever become a chrysalis. There are times when the heaven motive is, next to Christ, the legitimate support of the soul, when all other motives inevitably fail. John's Revelation, Paul's vision of the third heaven, his outlook upon the crown of righteousness, perhaps Jesus' transfiguration, show how God recognizes and provides for this need in the strongest of his servants. Death is not the only such moment, nor always the supreme one. The man who through the years has acquired no literary tastes, or scientific or other interests, on retirement from business finds himself with an empty heart and life, and often quickly dies. Unless the soul has ever and again been unconsciously returning to the heaven thought and longing, what it has in old age will be emptiness; and if the poor life can at all painlessly detach itself from all it has held most dear, it will have, not the rich, full hopeful heaven longing and faith, but only the death longing; it will behold, not "Jerusalem, my happy home," but the dreamless sleep which knows no waking. They tell us that for the welfare of the bodily eyes we must every little while sit down and gaze at far horizons, or we shall lose the best power both of distant and near-by sight. How sad to see the power of distant spiritual sight extirpated by disuse, blind, hopeless, or dubious eyes, where with exultant joy the soul ought to be beholding "heaven's morning break, and earth's vain shadows flee!" For at that hour such eyes are vain.

For earth's best work, the heavens must often open and give us snatches of the celestial songs and sights. It means freshness, beauty, power now; strength and depth all through; and at eventide, light.

XXXI

THE LAW OF THE EXCEPTION

One of the most puzzling things, to a mind which loves system and order and consistency, is the way in which general laws and forces are all the while failing to work as we felt we had a right to expect. The law is good, beautiful, reasonable; it ought to work; indeed God says it will work; but it certainly seems not to work. This not only bewilders us, but it sometimes "stumbles" us. We do not "renounce God and die," but our thoughts grow hazy, our touch less certain, our faith and hope less buoyant and cheerful. The law was so simple, so self-evident, an axiom of ethics or of faith: and there it is, "broken" continually.

The explanation, at its root, is just as simple as the law; absurdly simple, almost. Your great and good law was working, is working, but it is counteracted by some other force or law. When two mechanical forces are being exerted at right angles on the same object, neither ceases its working, but the two produce a "resultant," which moves diagonally. The bullet's course is a curve, compounded of the forward or upward movement it gets from the gun, and the downward pull of gravitation. The balloon has not suspended the law of gravitation, but it has risen apparently against gravitation, yet really by gravitation, by gravity's stronger pull upon the heavier air, which has therefore got beneath the balloon, and forced it to rise. There is no break; gravity's differing pull on the differing weights has produced the "exception," which is none at all.

There is in the world of spirit a "pneumatic" law that nothing ever evades, a law whose reasonableness every honest soul recognizes, and for whose tenderness every true heart thanks God. It is the law of reciprocity, compensation, "measure for measure." "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured unto you." "Judge not, and ye shall not be judged." The world is our mirror. Smile, and it smiles back. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy." How gloriously it works! You see it sweeping through the world, a real Gulf Stream from God's warm Southland, shedding blessings where it goes.

But how many are the exceptions! In this world many measure out meekness and get back oppression. Purest hearts time has known have poured out love and got back misunderstanding, even hate. Jesus for three years' ministry lavished love, kindness, wisdom, purity, power divine, beyond measure, and they meted him back a cross. But let no man's faith fail even at that black sin's monstrosity. The law was working, and is working, blessed be his holy Name!

One must remember the counteracting forces and laws. There is the law of the general opposition. There are two wide-spread forces in this world, not equal, but opposite, and bitterly hostile. We are not in the tranquil world that is to be, but in the warring world that is. Over against the beatitude, "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," is the beatitude at the climax: "Blessed are ye when men shall persecute you." When the love of God, and right, and truth, when purity and boundless benevolence, meet full the hate and blackness of sin, the cross is the result. They that will live godly shall suffer persecution. Nevertheless the reciprocity of love in the long run shall prevail; hate shall slink beaten into the prison-house, and in the palace of the king the

redeemed shall sing the victory of love and right. We shall see it more and more on earth as days go by.

Then there is the law of the individual objection, like the mountain ranges that jut up and refuse to let the healing cloud-streams water the plains below. Your peace goes out, but the house is not worthy. You lose something, for love rejoices in return, but "the house" loses most. The man has his own selfish ends; he has his surly nature; out of what rain you succeed in giving him he extracts thorny cactus. Jesus comes into his home; all he develops is scant courtesy and the criticizing spirit. But there are those just beside him drinking in forgiveness and love, and sobbing out their passionate tears of gratitude and adoration. The sun shines, even if that man does go into his cave, or build one out of gratuitous cement. It is an awful thing thus to pervert God's love; but not every one is doing it; and some who are doing so now will not always be able to resist.

Like this, but not so deliberate or so culpable, is the law of the local deflection. This is not the jutting mountain of an intended opposition or rejection, but the little teasing slopes and sandbeds and heated currents of misunderstanding, prejudice, human short-sightedness. You have only love in your heart. This man, as earnestly as you, desires the oncoming of the kingdom. Yet you get from him misunderstanding and opposition. You feel that the law of reciprocity is a mockery. It does not work. The trouble is either with you or with him; be sure of that. Will it continue always? Perhaps you will win him, or be won. The breezes of love often drive away the fog-banks of misunderstanding. In the meantime, rejoice to see how the general current is having its way more and more. And by and by! We shall know each other better when the mists have rolled away.

For there are two other laws at work. One is the law of the superior direction. Some think changes of weather come from sun-spots; that those deep storms within our central luminary set earthly currents moving which derange our prophecies. Not storms, but deep forces in the heart of God are shaping or permitting seeming modifications of this law for us. These exceptions are a part of our necessary discipline. The reward of a good soldier is often to be sent out to face the rain from the clouds, or guns. The hardness we meet induces in us the hardness we need; the seasoned love of virtue's veteran. Faith gets strength by wrestling with the problem of the exception. We are getting what we give.

And we are to remember that other law, the law of the distant development. This does not counteract, but it conditions, the law of reciprocity. It takes time to work out God's laws fully to their glorious effect. It takes more than time, it takes eternity. The forces of God are steadily working towards that far-off divine event toward which the whole creation moves; but they go their own gait. Some have thought it a puerile device to take a heaven to correct the inequalities of earth, yet as sure as the orbit of the soul is not threescore years and ten, but the eternities of the eternities, so surely the workings of God's glorious laws cannot be complete, nor ready for exhibition even to his own, until all the threads are gathered up in what may be the far-off future. And then we shall understand that not one word of the living God returned to him void, but each accomplished that which he pleased, and prospered in the thing whereto he sent it.

So we will continue to work lovingly with God. Failures will come. Out of four soils on which the good seed fell, three were bad; but the good seed had its own life, and the results were abundant harvest.

XXXII

"IMMANUEL'S GROUND"

Geographical latitude and longitude is one thing; spiritual latitude and longitude is another. "Hell's Half-acre," "The Devil's Commons," "No Man's Land," and "Immanuel's Ground" may all be situated on the same square mile of earth, in the same city block, within the four walls of the same house. The difference is not territorial or extensive, it is atmospheric and spiritual.

"Hell's Half-acre" is where the evil impulses of men are bearing, with but little restraint, their legitimate and ripened fruit. It would need only the complete withdrawal of God's restraining, counteracting influences to be hell itself. It *is* hell on earth.

In "The Devil's Commons" the careless appetites and desires are sowing life's wild oats in the fertile soil of license and self-indulgence. "Unchartered freedom," unregulated impulse, wild and evil-flavored growths abound.

"No Man's Land" is the debatable and debated strip where the forces of good and the forces of evil are striving for the mastery, and neither seems permanently to prevail. In this territory is the man who has not yet stepped clear out on Christ's side and gained his help for conquest, but who is struggling toward the right, now seemingly advancing, now pushed far back. In it also is the undecided, weak-willed, feeble-faithed Christian, who lives chiefly in the seventh of Romans, not the eighth. It is swept by shot and shell, unhappy, unquiet, claimed by both sides, "harassed" from both sides. "O wretched man that I am!"

Right in the midst of these is "Immanuel's Ground." It is the marching place of the believing, trusting, progressive, victorious Christian, the Christian who perceives his birthright, presses onward to his goal, and appropriates the power of the Lord Jesus for conquest. He is "marching through Immanuel's Ground to fairer worlds on high."

"Immanuel's Ground!" What a new aspect it gives to life; what trials and troubles and trivialities it glorifies; what a new zest and power it imparts!

Immanuel's Ground is earth, not heaven. It has its barren stretches of earthly drudgeries, disappointments, distresses. There are rugged paths, forbidding rocks and frowning mountains. Thistles and thorns are here; yes, and many a pitfall. But the "beauty of it all" is that in spite of that, in spite of everything, it is Immanuel's Ground; and the tempted and beleaguered, as well as the triumphant, soul can find all joy and power in that.

It is marked as to what it is (as all ground is) primarily by its *possession*. The awfulness of Hell's Half-acre is that it is stamped all over and all through by the deep "Black Hand," the burning finger-prints, of Satan, the "prince of the powers of the air." It is the kingdom of evil, the only kingdom he can lay claim to, whatever others he may pretend to deliver—the souls and lives of men, evil like himself, if less than himself. "The Devil's Commons" is not so clearly or deeply branded to the casual eye; many are there without knowing that they *are* there; or, being there, know not where they are. Yet it takes no great discernment to see that "sense and sin" have claimed it for their own. The torture of No Man's Land is its seemingly disputed possession, its apparent oscillation from one contestant to the other; and yet where God is not prevailing in the soul, and his conquest is not progressing, the devil's is.

But Immanuel's Ground is all possessed by our Lord Jesus Christ. It is all within his firm and masterful grasp, as well as his rightful ownership. This is No Man's Land, this is no *terra incognita,* through which I am marching heavenward. He owns it, and holds it, and has it all mapped out. The stretches of sand and rock, the frowning mountains, are not only known to him, but they are his. The heats, the frosts, the tornadoes, as well as the refreshing breezes, are his. They meet me just exactly as he wills, and not otherwise. Obstacles they look to be from my side; stepping-stones they are from his. While I march onward, I am never off his territory, never for an instant "in the enemy's country." Rains, storms, and whirlwinds may come and foes may assail. But it is all Immanuel's Ground. "All things are yours; and ye are Christ's; and Christ is God's."

What makes it Immanuel's Ground, again, is the pervading *Presence* of this land. Here are sacred memories unnumbered, but that is the least of it. Here is a Presence unmeasured, immeasurable. This region he dwells in. Here he tabernacles. At this place he imparts himself to the needy soul. At this rock of difficulty he reveals his tender love. Within this otherwise thrice dreary stretch he gives to the thirsty soul the cold water of his loving presence. Each step of the journey he is here. We sing

> The hill of Zion yields a thousand sacred sweets
> Before we reach the heavenly fields, or walk the golden streets,

but what we chiefly mean is that here he gives, not gifts, but himself. The real fruits and streams and refreshing breezes are himself, the Life of our souls.

Immanuel's Ground has its own peculiar, pervading, prevailing *power*. Journeying through any other ground whatever, we find the power with which we began waning

by and by. We seek new increments of it, and seem to get them, but they too dry up and die away very soon. But not so in Immanuel's Ground. Anywhere, in any strait, any circumstance, we may send down our rootlets into the earth and draw up his strength; anywhere we may thrust up our antennæ into his heaven, and draw down his grace; anywhere we may make contact with his love and his victorious might flows in. Nay, it is ours, if we will, to preserve that contact unbroken and, utter weakness as in ourselves we are, never to fail of the strength we need. "Lo, I am with you always." "They drank of the spiritual rock that followed them; and that Rock was Christ." "I can do all things in him that strengtheneth me." Explorers get away from their base of supplies into arid regions where starvation ever dwells. Military expeditions get out of touch with their supporting arsenals and armies, and are wiped out by an enveloping foe. But we never; this is all Immanuel's Ground.

Possession, and presence, and power; and then, *promise*. The conquerors of Peru and Mexico could endure every hardship, risk every danger, tread every weary desert waste, scale every mountain, for they hoped to find at their journey's end the boundless treasures of the cities they sought. They only hoped. We know. All along the way the rich experiences of Jesus' love and power have been the delicious foretaste-pledge of the fulness that shall be. We have had the first-fruits. And if his grace, love, and power have been so sweet and blessed here, what must they be in the glory to follow? "We're marching through Immanuel's Ground to fairer worlds on high."

We are *marching*. That is the characteristic human note of this section of God's homestead where we are—its *progress*. Nobody stands still, anywhere at all. No one stands still on the swift slopes of perdition's toboggan

slide; he rockets downward at the last. No one stands still in the broad, easy reaches of sensuality and self-indulgence; he wakes one day to find himself on the abyss' edge. But in none of these places is there real *marching*. A march is a directed, determined, persistent, systematic journey of one who is making advancing conquest. A march is by command; a march is in concert; men do not march alone; a march "eats up" the ground by progressive step; a march has laid out its goal, its path, and its itinerary; a march moves to music which thrills every nerve to buoyant motion in every step. No one ever moons or mopes or minuets or meanders through Immanuel's Ground. He alone makes his way who marches. If you are not marching, you are in one of the other territories.

The dreariest temporary deserts, the fiercest moral conflicts, the hardest spiritual climbs, will daunt no soul that really grasps the great fact of the eternal presence and comradeship of our Lord Jesus Christ. "God With Us." The whole world is transfigured by that which is coming, and by him who is.

Then let our songs abound and every tear be dry;
We're marching through Immanuel's Ground to fairer worlds on high.

XXXIII

ETERNALIZING THE TEMPORARY

Everything earthly, except the undying soul, is temporary. All human relationships, in themselves, are tent stuff, faulty, flimsy, fleeting. The lighter and more superficial associations, how ephemeral! "Ships that pass in the night," life's kaleidoscope taking a new shift, human particles touching a moment, then far away and never approaching again. Even of the really formative associations, in schools, business, "society," how few last long! Just a handful are left near life's close, and then all go, even the real friendships, the actual bands and bonds of souls that understood and loved. There is nothing more glorious than a friend, or more common than friendships frayed or utterly and completely fractured. Death, literal death, did it. No touch, voice, prayer, can bring him back. Distance did it. He just moved away to another continent, State, city, ward, street, and that close, blessed, delightful association was done. Disagreement did it. Friendship could not stand the shock of anger, selfishness, jealousy, contending wills. Something even lighter caused it, simply drifting; physically side by side, with no dissension, no quarrel, no "paroxysm," you just insensibly moved apart in inner feeling. No gale scattered that filmy cloud; only common breeze and sun.

Are not the very closest ties, parentage, brotherhood, marriage, but tent stuff, after all? They very often gloriously survive all life's shocks, frayings, sappings, but they end. The tie between youthful husband and wife begins so genuinely, sweetly, deeply, that you are sure all life's

uses will never wear it out; but death snaps it at a touch. Fifty years side by side two others walk; surely nothing conceivable could break those bonds; but one day one goes on alone.

Everything in us revolts at the idea. Logic fights against it. We cannot believe that delights, satisfactions, fellowships, so sweet, true, high, ought to stop. Such conclusion seems lame and impotent. Our sense of real, inner propriety, which is logic dug deeper, fights against it. We cannot assent that the time, energy, heart-substance we men and women who feel ourselves made in the image of God put into things can be thus ineffectually expended. We build our best into them, and they frazzle out like this! Love fights against it. Charles Kingsley never could concede that Christ's saying that there was no marrying nor giving in marriage in heaven could possibly mean that the deep, true, intense union of soul between him and his wife could ever disappear at any touch, least of all at Christ's!

But Christ puts the eternity *in*. Every real, human relationship, fragile, perishable, fleeting, as it may be, must be in itself, can be eternalized. Like the unrighteous steward we can project even money relationships into the heavenly and the unending. "Make to yourselves friends by means of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, . . they may receive you into the eternal tabernacles." The money, the bare money relations, are not carried over, but the friendship, the brotherhood, expressed and established, are. All life's true relationships can have eternity injected into them, or be transformed into the immortal, like Baucis and Philemon's cottage in the Lycaonian legend, when walls, beams, and roof changed from earthly wood to heavenly gold and silver.

We begin to do that when we start out with the de-

termination to use every earthly contact or association for eternal ends. The supreme "eternal end" is the glory of God, "man's chief end"—and everything's. Suppose one has that before him in every relation. It shall glorify God, it shall advance the kingdom of love and right and truth. Acquaintance shall do it. Business shall; marriage, brotherhoods, parenthood. Could God's own eternal glory, power, life, fail to get so entangled in the meshes of that life that nothing could break or jar or wear them loose? This one grand aim involves innumerable details, auxiliary aims. One deliberately, systematically, and persistently sets himself to achieve intermediate ends with heaven-stuff in them. This business shall help me to lead men directly to Christ or build them up in him; each friendship be my opportunity to introduce, or bring to greater intimacy, our one great Friend; marriage, my vantage-ground to help my life's partner, myself, and others, Christward and heavenward. My home shall be a life-saving station, a trap for Jesus, baited with love, kindness, and prayer. Associations like that cannot help passing over into eternity; nothing can stop them. Not every associate or friend I try to influence for Christ will respond effectively, but some will; the fruit will be glorious and ample, and no grave can end it; that "tabernacle" is "eternal," unbreakable. Marriage? Every day it is building into rock, and building rock, which no storm can shake.

Like this is the second method; putting into these perishable things imperishable qualities, the characteristics of abiding reality—genuineness, unselfishness, closeness, substance, deep union. That partnership is partnership indeed, actual sharing of the deepest things; partnership not in goods, property, commercial enterprises alone, but in soul riches, soul endeavors, soul ventures; in the knowl-

edge, blessing, power, of God one of these partners may be called from the world first, but they are partners still, partners for ever. Just so, that friendship is made so deep, true, unselfish, unifying, comprehensive, that one friend can say in his feeling, if not in his own inherent power, something as Rowland Hill sang in his last days of his Saviour, "We two are so joined, he'll not be in glory, and leave me behind." Similarly, a family, real to the deepest depths, to the widest reaches, loftiest ideals, tenderest love, has a timeless life. Between a real father, real son, real daughter, with one heart, one hope, one aspiration, and that in God, all the years cannot get in, all life, or all death: "the gates of Hades cannot prevail against it." And real marriage brings, and is, such sympathy, such agreement in high purpose, such understanding, such identification in eternal things, in God's deep things, in God himself, that—what can sever its ties? As it marches toward old age and death, the earthly, fleshly, fleeting, vanishes, and the eternal grows. What can slay the eternal?

Our secret lies still deeper. These diviner aims and loftier qualities befit the eternal, but cannot of themselves absolutely secure it. One sure way there is—putting Christ into them. He is the guaranty and producing power of that real immortality, which as distinct from mere endless existence, we call eternal life. Whatever he is in, has eternity; it "hath the Son"; it "hath eternal life." Charles Kingsley might expect that blessed marriage union here to survive all shocks of change and death, if in its parties and its essence, Jesus Christ dwelt at the heart, empowered the life, transformed it into his own likeness. What was fleshly and earthly would pass away—and who would want it to continue? But what had Christ in it would remain. In every earthly relationship—parenthood,

brotherhood, friendship, association, if in the partakings and the partakers the indwelling Christ furnishes the vitalizing power, it partakes of the timelessness of " Christ in you, the hope of glory." This will abide, and nothing else can, or ought to.

XXXIV

MY MASTER

Only one being in the universe has a right to the name of " Master," in its fulness. To only One have I, as an immortal soul, made in the image of God, the right to give it. For any other to claim it, is arrogant presumption, intolerable tyranny. For me to give it to any other is degradation and disgrace, soul-slavery and partial or complete soul-suicide.

There are others to whom, for temporary purposes and in strictly limited degrees, the name can be applied; but these purposes at last reach their goals; these territories soon find their end.

My teacher is the master of my mind, for a while. He determines the content and method of my thought, and dominates its action. But the time comes when, if his work is well done, I throw off his leading-strings, follow out my own independent researches, seek my own materials of truth, and build my own structures. I was his pupil. I am my own master. None has the right to crowd me back into the old harness nor have I the right to let myself be crowded back.

My trainer, or physician, is temporarily the dictator of my actions. I follow his directions. I obey his orders. He controls me. He controls me for the purpose of health maintained, regained or attained, or of fitness, or skill acquired. Those reached, his dominance disappears.

My general, if I am a soldier, or my voluntarily chosen leader, in other cooperative effort, has, for the objects of the association, the temporary, partial mastery of my life.

Get beyond those objects, in function or in time, and his command ceases.

My employer owns my skill, my energy, my time, in the thing for which he pays me. That is no degradation to me; it is simply justice to him; and justice, like love, never degrades. I am voluntarily giving him the fair equivalent of service for the money he gives me. It ought to be honest, intelligent, generous service. But beyond that he has no claim or rightful power. He buys my hours, my skill; he cannot buy me.

My country owns me; the bounds of its ownership are very broad, extending to affection raised to an indefinitely high degree, to the expenditure of money, time, energy, and if need be, of life itself, my own life, the life of my dearest. Yet there are whole realms that are sacred from even that sacred touch; there, it cannot command; it must not ask to. If it goes farther, it becomes a tyrant, and I become a slave.

Every one of these "masteries," and all others but one, are limited in their extent and in their nature. There is one realm into which none of them can rightfully enter; entrance is intrusion. They cannot control my conscience, or command my inner heart's affections, or the movements of my spirit. I am the sovereign of my soul. Their mastery, too, is not inherent. They are not my natural owners or controllers. Their only right over my adult self is the right I accord. Teacher, trainer, physician, general, leader, even my country, do not own me. I own them.

But my Master! His rightful sway knows no limitations anywhere. This Teacher can never be outgrown. His knowledge is absolute, his intellectual authority is complete. For he is not simply Jesus of Nazareth, but "the light which lighteth every man, coming into the world." His truth makes us free; as we walk mentally in

his footsteps we not only do not stumble, but our minds are for the first time brought to, and consistently maintained in, manhood's power and liberty. There is no area or stratum of thinking in which his regulative principles do not prevail. His law is the hygiene of the soul; and that law is liberty. We never grow beyond our Leader; we grow in him and into him, progressively and forever.

Our Trainer and Physician, likewise, is building into our souls through all our lives his precepts and practises; and increasingly he controls from within. Note well the word "increasingly"; the control is not perfect, yet or here. Christ is not completely formed in us yet; and till he is, we must continue to look away as well as within to Jesus for his orders. Whether the orders come from within or from without, we will, like the aged Michelangelo, "carry our satchels still." We must be lifelong schoolboys, never graduating disciples of Jesus.

Our General, Captain, Employer, commands us utterly, entirely. No king or chieftain or country, however absolute or despotic, ever really thought to command every area of the subjects' or soldiers' or citizens' lives, every depth of their being, every vibration of their souls, every aspiration of their spirits, every current of their wills. But this is what our Master proposes. When any man touches another on the shoulder and says, "Follow me," he is making a tremendous demand, even though he does not mean it, never can, never could, mean it entirely. But Jesus means it entirely. He has the right to speak the word. We are his. The broad arrow of his sovereignty is stamped upon us; the red thread of his redemption runs through every inch of life's fabric, every fiber of man's heart. He would dominate every action. "Ye call me Teacher and Lord; and ye say well; for so I am." His mastery is absolute. We are to do all he says. He

asks, "Why call ye me Lord, Lord, and do not the things that I say?" All justice, all philanthropy, all aggressive action, are to be done in his name. Every thought, even, is to be "brought into captivity to Christ." No realm is to be left unsubjected, no province or precinct unruled. More stupendous still, he demands the complete and supreme dominance of our affections. Out of deep, warm, throbbing heart-fountains we must love him, intensely, burningly, supremely, more than houses, possessions, honors, comforts, ease, ambitions, loved ones, anything we have, or are.

The marvelously wonderful, absolutely natural thing about it all is, that when we once get a fair look at him we gladly concede every one of these claims, give him the name he asks for, and settle into the relation as into the native matrix of our souls. In slavery between man and man there is degradation for both master and mastered, but between man and the Son of man there can be no degradation on either side. Jesus feels no degradation in being Master: his mastery is not restraint, fettering, absorption; it is liberation, enlargement, enrichment. We feel no degradation in being his servants; for our service is glad consecration, the heart finding its true control, the satellite revolving around its central Sun. Saul of Tarsus saw Jesus full-sized, and fell at his feet. "What shall I do, Lord?" was the first eager question of his newborn life. After years of service, as Paul the apostle he cried, "Henceforth let no man trouble me; I bear branded on my body the marks of Jesus." It was his highest honor, his soul's complete happiness, to be "a slave of Jesus Christ."

"My Master"! Owner and Ruler by every right; authority, creation, redemption, preservation, character, grace and love! "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive

the blessing, the honor, the glory, the dominion, forever and ever!" How the heart thrills out of itself into heaven's own air as we speak the words! How they glorify every thought, action, feeling! Where, oh, where, in all my life, here or hereafter, can thy sovereign writs cease to run, Jesus my Beloved, Jesus my MASTER?

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